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WEALTH AND LABOUR.

WEALTH AND LABOUR.

A Novel.

BY LORD B * * * * * * *

AUTHOR OF "MASTERS AND WORKMEN," "FARCE OF LIFE," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY,

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WEALTH AND LABOUR.

CHAPTER I.

About an hour before sunset, Mary Thornton and her companions, having left the sea side, again reached the streets of the town of S——. She came on slowly, leaning on Edward's arm, whilst Lilly and her father, having walked more quickly, were about a hundred paces in advance of them.

The High Street, up which their way led, was crowded with people, yet there was nothing cheerful in the aspect of the throng. The wives of the artizans and labourers were not, as usual, at that hour, strolling happily about, with their children, or buying provisions for

the morrow. With wan and melancholy countenances, they sauntered along in little parties, murmuring their discontent to each other, and casting glances of vain longing at the shops, the contents of which they were unable to purchase. It was said there were above a thousand men out of work in the town, for all the manufacturers had followed the example of Parkins, and closed their works till they could, as they said, break down the pride of the workmen, and bring them to their own terms.

It seemed to unprejudiced observers, a hopeless struggle of labour against capital; for the unemployed workmen daily lost ground, whilst capital retained all its strength, to crush, and to command, with hunger for its minister. But the workmen were not only deceived by their own passions, which so easily blind even the most rational, but men who made a trade of these passions, were hourly adding fresh excitement to their discontent. Atkins

was one of the most active of these emissaries of evil, and though Fuller had denounced him, as an agent of Parkins, his flattery was so acceptable to his victims, that few could be persuaded to doubt his integrity.

The men therefore still persisted in their dogged resistance to the will of the masters, but the women, as the difficulty of procuring food for their families increased, began to murmur; and Atkins announced that fact to his employers, as their first step towards victory. It is a cruel state of society, where the success of one party is ever built on the misery and ruin of another.

Want already fearfully manifested itself on the surface of social life, and as Edward Mallory passed that evening amidst the melancholy groups then lounging in the streets, his heart was moved to deep commiseration, by the spectacle of the misery to which a mistaken estimation of their own powers had reduced so large a number of his fellow creatures.

"The English workmen feel that they are the victims of some great error in the social system," he said, addressing Mary Thornton, "but they are yet ignorant how vast and concentrated must be the moral strength, which can subvert the power of gold. The slaves in Old Rome attempted it, with physical force, but that then failed, and has done often since. The poor, alone, were never yet triumphant in rebellion. There are only two things which, besides emigration, can improve their condition. Economy—and secular education! But they must economise their present resources, and they must educate themselves, for the education their superiors are willing to bestow on them, has long been proved of small advantage. But look there, Mary," he continued, pointing to a splendid gin palace, where crowds of men and women, eager to find oblivion of their misery, were pressing round the door. Look at that spectacle; the most mournful I behold in England. As long as so many of our la-

bourers give themselves up to the degrading vice of drinking, which bring all others in its train, their hopes of progress are mere delusion They may disturb society—but slaves they must remain."

At this moment a lady and gentleman on horseback, rode rapidly past them, whom Edward and Mary both recognised to be Oswald Mallory and Miss Parkins. They had met, by chance, in the country, and the lady having made advances to a reconciliation, they rode back to the town together.

Miss Parkins sat her horse remarkably well, and her dashing appearance, with her own and Oswald's livery servant behind her, provoked many observations.

"A nice pair!" cried one audacious girl. "Money and pride will go well together. I suppose they never heard that the lady's grandmother was cook at Stoke Court."

"What does that signify, if she has lots of gold," said another. "The gentlemen at

Stoke Court, want old Parkins's money to pay their debts."

"And it may be well if they get it," said another. "I have heard some say, that his own affairs are not so flourishing as formerly. It is not all gold that glitters."

"Credit Jim!" said a little thin old man, with a finely developed forehead. "It is not money now, that 'makes the mare to go,' but credit—my lad!"

"Ay, credit is a fine thing!" answered the other workman.

"May be, yes—may be, no," rejoined the old man. "People did not like paper, when I was young; they all talked about gold in the hand, and that is what Mr. Parkins has not got. Credit is like the great balloon we saw last year—it is blown out, and it flies high—till all at once, a something we cannot see keeps oozing away from it—oozing away, till it falls together, and then down it comes at once, and those who trusted to it have the very life

knocked out of them. I don't like this credit system, it just sets up swindlers at the expense of honest men."

"But, Jim, what's that? there is some accident," cried the second speaker, as a loud cry was audible at some distance up the street, and men, women, and children, were seen suddenly running in the direction whence it came.

Mary and Edward were too far distant to be able to distinguish the cause of the commotion; but, from the exclamations of those a little further in advance, they quickly understood, that a man had been knocked down by the horse of Oswald Mallory.

"Is he much injured?" asked Edward, eagerly, of a decent-looking labourer, who said he was standing close to the sufferer, at the moment of the accident.

"I cannot say," answered the man, in a surly tone, as he glanced at the gentlemanly clothes of the speaker. "He may be dead, for

what the rider cares, for what does it signify when one of them rides down one of us. It is only a beggar the less."

The workman then walked away, without paying any more attention to the accident.

Mathew Fuller, leaving Lilly by the side of Miss Thornton, rushed forward, with eager curiosity, into the thickest of the throng.

Oswald and Miss Parkins had ridden on, for they both considered the accident likely to entail unpleasant consequences, which they were anxious to escape from, without feeling the slightest compassion for the sufferer, whoever he was. They made no enquiries, therefore, and had already disappeared at the upper end of the street, when the actor, pushing his way through the crowd, had got near to the unfortunate man, who lay bleeding on the ground.

Fuller uttered a short cry of astonishment and horror, when his eyes fell on the insensible form, for though the face was only partially visible, it had all the apyearance of death.

Nothing shows the worthy character of the English populace, or the English mob, as some are pleased to designate her laborious children, more than the mute sympathy they display, in all cases of accident, or misfortune, in our public streets. Some one has said, that if the British Government was suspended to-morrow, the people would continue to govern themselves, and the order which constitutes such strength, is most remarkable on these occasions.

There was, that evening, no confusion in the crowd, no rudeness, nor loud contention. Some of the by-standers, as if awestruck by the calamity, were silently gazing at the sufferer, whilst others, with tenderness and commiseration, depicted on their countenances, were assisting a policeman to lift him from the ground. It was evident that he was not recognised by any of these persons, and yet all were ready to give him aid, whilst he who had done the in-

jury had ridden off, careless whether he lived or died.

"Where are you going to take him?" inquired a tall, gaunt man, with a high, red nose, of the policeman on duty.

"I think we had better carry him to the next surgeon's," was the reply; "and we must try to find out his friends."

"I know one of them," said the stranger, who was no other than lawyer Atkins, "and I shall be glad to help in any way."

"Home, home," were the words now uttered by the wounded man, when consciousness faintly returned.

Then having whispered the direction to the policeman, he was gently lifted into a litter, which had been brought for his removal.

Fuller did not wait to see the conclusion of this arrangement, nor to ask any further questions, but with far more eagerness than he had come thither, he again pushed through the dense

mass of people, which had gathered round the sufferer, and made his way back to his friends. But all this took some time, and the little party had walked to a considerable distance, before he overtook them. Lilly, who had been running on alone, was again with Miss Thornton.

"Mr. Edward," he said, in a voice of extreme agitation, "I have seen a terrible spectacle. For mercy's sake, take Miss Thornton hence, as quickly as possible, for I fear they are coming this way. Take her home, and return to me here. I will remain to see if any thing can be done to help this poor man, for he is still alive."

"Go, Edward, go back at once!" exclaimed Mary, eagerly. "I can return home alone; I must not take you away, if you can be of any service, where aid is so much wanted."

"Yes, he can be of service, of great service," said Fuller; "and you, Miss Thornton, will kindly take Lilly with you."

"Oh, yes," answered the girl; "the people are all running to the scene of the accident, so we shall meet with no impediment. Have no anxiety on my account, dear Edward, but go at once."

To this arrangement, Mallory made no objection, for he well understood, from the actor's tone and manner, that there were more reasons than he had explained for his extreme agita ion.

"Come, sir, come quickly," he said, as soou as they had seen Mary and Lilly across the street, "I am glad we are alone, for it might have been the death of Miss Thornton, had she seen her father, as I did, bleeding and dying on the street."

"Good heavens! Fuller! can it be Thornton whom they have killed!" exclaimed Edward, turning pale with surprise and terror.

"He may not be killed," was the reply; "but he was long insensible, and was covered with blood."

"And yet Oswald has ridden on!" was the young man's exclamation. "He could surely not have known him."

"Who can say! some people have hard hearts," said the actor, with a low laugh of contempt. "It is no uncommon thing, for such as he to get out of these scrapes as fast as they can; and, besides, he could show no compassion to Mr. Thornton in Miss Parkins's presence, for I hear they are engaged to be married."

Though they hurried on with great rapidity, Fuller had been so much impeded by the crowd, in his pursuit of Mallory and Miss Thornton, that nearly twenty minutes had elapsed, from the time he left Thornton, till he regained the high street with Edward. To their inexpressible disappointment, all trace of the Custom-House Officer, and the crowd which had surrounded him, had disappeared; nor could they learn from any one whom they questioned,

whither the wounded man had been conveyed.

One shopman, who stood at a door, said he believed he had been carried home; but where that was, no one had taken the trouble to enquire. People were shutting up their shops, and, intent on their own business, had already forgotten the transient excitement of the accident, the sufferer being removed from their sight. All Mallory could learn was, that if he applied to the police, in the morning, he might probably obtain the information he desired.

Bitterly did he regret, that he had stood, unconsciously, so near the man whose residence had, for several weeks, been the object of his search, and in whose fate, both on Mary's and his own account, he was so deeply interested.

Thus it is, we often in life approach to the very verge of all we most desire, and yet, by some caprice of fate, are turned aside for ever,

to mourn over our disappointment, though frequently ignorant how nearly our hopes had once attained fruition.

After wandering vainly about, for above an hour, without obtaining any positive information about Thornton, Mallory returned with the actor to Mary's lodging.

The girl, unconscious of her father's misfortune, was delighted to see them return; but loudly expressed her astonishment, that Lilly was not their companion. Fuller, who had left her with Miss Thornton, was deeply distressed to find that she had not yet come home.

It was in vain, that both Edward and Mary endeavoured to persuade him, that the little girl was so accustomed to the streets, that he ought to have no apprehension on account of her absence, as she would, no doubt, soon return. Fuller heard them, but answered not, for he had his own ideas on the subject, and his affection inspired a thousand anxieties, with

which others, he well knew, could not sympathise.

Mary told him, that as soon as Lilly was left alone with her, the little girl asked her eagerly, if she had seen the man who had been knocked down by the horse, and then repeated, more than once, that she wished she had gone with her father, to see all that was going on. Suddenly she had cried out, that she would follow him, and saying, quickly, that she would soon be home again, she ran back to the scene of the accident, with the speed of a bird.

"No doubt she missed me in the dusk, and got there before us," said Fuller, whose apprehensions were by no means lessened by this story.

The gloom of evening was rapidly approaching, and the poor actor told Mallory, with great agitation, that he could know no rest until he had found his child.

It was impossible for any one to behold the

father's anxiety unmoved; and Edward, without hesitation, at once offered to accompany him in search of her. He had a lingering hope, that whilst in pursuit of Lilly, they might still discover some trace of poor Thornton.

It was not without uneasiness, that Mary Thornton saw them depart, and though she sat down to work, she frequently stopped her needle, in the hope of hearing Lilly's footsteps on the stairs. But after repeated disappointments, her heart became more earnest and more sad, and a presentiment of approaching evil, by degrees, took entire possession of her mind.

How often does the solemn image of death thus arise before us, even in the midst of joy, unveiling the grave which waits alike for us and all we love! And even Mary Thornton, young, fair, and happy in her love, could not escape its shadow.

CHAPTER II.

The place to which Thornton had requested to be carried, was situated in a squalid and miserable street, leading down a steep bank to the harbour, in the most sordid and wretched part of the town. The houses were black with smoke, and ashes and offal lay in heaps before the doors; the windows were broken and patched up with various materials, giving the whole an air of poverty and disorder. The only decent building in the neighbourhood was a public house, and even this, anywhere else, would have been considered a wretched place.

In an upper garret of this miserable abode, Thornton, after a temporary absence from S——, had returned, to find concealment. Ex-

empt there from all observation and restraint, he had freely indulged his favourite propensity, and had passed the time, whilst his daughter and his friends were making anxious search for him, in an almost perpetual state of intoxication. Death must speedily have been the consequence of this mad career, had it not been interrupted by the accident of that evening.

Though half drunk when knocked down by the horse of Oswald Mallory, the flow of blood from the wounds in his head perfectly sobered him; and when he revived from his temporary swoon, he was able to point out the house, which he called his home; as his finances were now very low, he had occupied the very worst room it contained.

Whilst Thornton was carried along the street, he seemed again to relapse into an unconscious state; but Atkins did not desert him, and continued with him, even after he entered the house, and saw him laid on the low truckle bed, which was almost the only furniture in

the wretched garret, to which the landlord desired him to be carried. This man grumbled much at his being brought there, until Atkins gave him to understand, that he would be answerable for all the expenses incurred on the sick man's account.

A surgeon was then summoned, and Thornton's wounds were dressed. When this was done, this gentleman, to whom the Custom-House Officer was unknown, took Atkins aside, and enquired if he was a friend of the sufferer.

The lawyer assured him that he was a relative, and gently hinted, that some pecuniary embarrassments had made it necessary for the unfortunate man to remain a short time in concealment.

"I understand," replied the surgeon. "Such cases are of daily occurrence—and are, in fact, not extraordinary in a great commercial country like this. People, we all know, are obliged, in self-defence, to live beyond their

means, and then they have to draw up at last—nothing in the world more natural."

"And I may then rely upon your secresy as to this poor fellow's hiding-place?" demanded Atkins.

"Oh, perfectly—entirely—of course," was the surgeon's reply. "Secresy is part of our profession; but what I wanted to tell you, my dear sir, is, that your friend, whether he is in debt, or out of it, is in a very bad way. He has evidently had a slight attack of paralysis, already, brought on by excess of drinking, and but for this accident, he would probably not have survived many days, for another fit of intoxication must have caused speedy death. If we can now keep strong liquors from him, he may, perhaps, survive a week, but not longer. I should advise you to send for any near relations he may happen to have, and should his worldly affairs be still unsettled, the sooner it is done, the better."

"I will take all that upon myself," replied

Atkins, with the most consummate assurance, "only, my dear sir, it would be most distressing to have the poor man disturbed by importunate creditors, in his last hours, and I must be very cautious to keep his abode secret."

"You may rely upon my silence, sir, for, in fact, I know nothing about him," replied the medical man. "Good morning, sir; I will send the necessary medicine, and return again shortly, and he must be kept quiet."

"Every thing you order shall be done," said the lawyer, who gladly saw this gentleman depart, whom he had summoned more for the sake of appearances, than from any desire to prolong the existence of the unfortunate Thornton.

He then returned to the sick man's room, and perceiving that he was recognised, he told the sufferer to be perfectly tranquil, for that every thing should be provided for him, which his situation rendered necessary.

"My little Mary—my little Mary," were the half articulate words in which Thornton replied; and he made a gesture, to intimate that the presence of Atkins was unpleasant to him.

The lawyer pretended not to understand either the words, or the sign; but, after the arrival of an old female nurse, who had been sent by the surgeon, he hastily told Thornton that he would return the next morning to see how he was going on, and then abruptly departed. It was already past seven o'clock, and he had yet much to do that evening.

As he left the public-house, he was in some doubt whether he should derive most advantage from communicating the secret of Thornton's residence to Mr. Parkins, or Oswald Mallory, by both of whom he had been employed to discover it. But he decided in favour of the latter. It is pleasanter to serve the young than the old, for they generally pay more liberally. He felt likewise, that, by the pos-

session of this secret, he had Parkins entirely in his power. He proceeded, therefore, quickly to a certain livery stable in the town, where Oswald kept his horses. He knew him well enough to feel convinced, that he was more likely to find him there, than in Miss Parkins's company.

Nor was he mistaken. When he entered the stable, the first person he saw was Mr. Oswald Mallory, holding up the leg of the horse he had lately ridden, and examining, with extreme attention and care, a slight hurt it had received in stumbling over poor Thornton.

"Confound the fool," he said, addressing the groom, "why could he not keep out of my way. If the horse has any blemish, I may lose more than a hundred and fifty pounds by this accident."

"The poor man was tipsy, sir," returned the servant. "I am afraid he was far more hurt than your horse."

"So much the better," cried Oswald. "It

will teach him to keep out of other people's way, for the future."

"I think that very likely," said Atkins, here drily interposing.

"Ha, my good fellow, is that you!" cried Oswald, looking up with surprise, "I just wanted to consult you, about a question of damages. A half drunken fellow, has nearly thrown down my horse ——."

"Yes, so I understand; but as your horse has very nearly knocked the man's brains out, it is rather an awkward business to meddle with;" was the caustic reply.

"Is he likely to die?" demanded Mallory, with some consternation.

"That remains to be seen," said Atkins, "but if you will come into the yard for a few minutes, I have something to say to you, in private."

Oswald, under some apprehension, silently complied with this request, nor did the lawyer

address him, till they had walked to some distance.

"Mr. Mallory," he then said, "in a low voice, the man whom you knocked down, is dying."

"The devil he is! how do you know that?" was the young man's reply.

"I have seen him carried home," said Atkins, coolly. "I do not think he recognised you, more than you did him, and yet you know him well."

"Confound him! who is he?" demanded the gentleman impatiently.

"Thornton!" answered Atkins, turning his sharp eyes keenly on his companion's face.

The young man started.

"What! Mary Thornton's father!" he cried.

"Yes, Mary's father!" returned the lawyer.

"And you say he is dying?"

"Yes, but not of the kick your horse be-

stowed on him; he has drunk himself nearly to death, and cannot hold out much longer."

"And you know where he is lodged?" was Oswald's eager demand.

"I have stood by his bedside," answered the lawyer, and I have taken every possible precaution, to prevent any one else discovering his abode."

"Upon my life you are a capital fellow!" exclaimed Oswald. "We must keep him out of the way, as long as possible, to frighten my amiable brother."

"And to keep Parkins in order," said the pettifogger. "He will pay roundly to prevent him telling secrets."

"But I must see him without delay, or he may be dead before the morning," said Mallory, abruptly. "When I proposed for his daughter, he always answered, that he had no right to dispose of her hand, without the consent of some one else. Now we have him in our power, we must make him tell, who this person

is; for though I have flirted a little with Miss Parkins, when I had a quarrel with Mary Thornton, I am not disposed to give the little girl up, for a half bred, purse-proud vixen."

"But her fortune, Mr. Oswald," said the lawyer, softly.

"Oh, confound the fortune!" was the reply. "If the bank fails, she won't have a sixpence."

"Unless Parkins settles all his fortune on her beforehand," said the wily informer.

"I want neither her nor her money," replied Oswald. "That is my father's scheme, for patching up affairs, so if he is very much involved, he may marry her himself! I have set my heart on Mary Thornton, and the sooner I speak with her father the better."

"Follow me then," said Atkins, and he led the way, with rapid steps, to the miserable hiding place of the Custom House Officer.

The master of the public house where Thornton lay, had long been a humble agent,

in Sir Thomas Mallory's elections, and had been employed to purchase the lowest class of the borough electors, and to treat them at the Baronet's expense. It need scarcely be added, that he was a man of exceedingly accommodating principles, and had no scruples of conscience, as to whom he served, provided he sold his beer. Oswald, who was perfectly well acquainted with the value of his honesty, did not fail to slip a sovereign into his hands, when he requested him to show the way to Thornton's room.

The Landlord put the money silently into his pocket, but the glance he cast at Oswald, fully expressed his readiness to serve him without scruple, in whatever way he might require.

"I know the way, so you need not come up stairs," said Atkins, seeing that their host was about to precede them to the sick man's chamber, and taking the candle from his hand, he

passed quickly before his companion, up the stairs. The garret they entered, on the third story, was so dimly lighted, by a glimmering rushlight, that Oswald could, at first, scarcely distinguish, even by the help of the candle which Aikins carried, a low and miserable pallet in a gloomy corner, under the sloping roof, on which poor Thornton lay. His clothes were scattered in disorder on the floor, where they had been hastily cast, by those who brought him thither, for there was no table, and no other furniture whatever in the wretched place, except two broken, old rush-bottomed chairs.

The sick man lay motionless, on his low flock bed, his head bound up, and his eyes closed, giving no other sign of life, but the moans, which burst at intervals, from his pale lips. His beard was of several days' growth, the bed clothes were spotted with blood, from the wound on his forehead, and the part of his

face left uncovered by bandages, was so livid, that even Oswald, unfeeling as he was, started back with dismay, when his eyes fell upon the ghastly and altered form of his old acquaintance.

Atkins went up to the bed, and silently felt the pulse of the hand which lay uncovered.

"Is he alive?" murmured Oswald, gazing anxiously on his face, for even he shrunk from the consciousness of having caused the poor man's death, when the reality was thus brought home to him.

"Who asks that question?" demanded Thornton, faintly. "Who supposes that I am dead? I don't want to die, if my debts were only paid. Will nobody help me to pay my debts? Mary, is that you, Mary?"

"No, sir, it is Mr. Oswald Mallory," said Atkins, in a low voice,

"And what does he want here?" demanded

Thornton, sharply. "Those Mallorys were a bad connexion, both for me and Blake. Sir Thomas never forgave him for marrying his sister. Blake is a good hearted fellow; but he has been hardly used, and I don't deserve that he should pay my debts."

"But there are other people who are very ready to pay your debts, Mr. Thornton," said Atkins. "If Mr. Oswald Mallory was married to your daughter Mary, I engage he would pay your debts in a week."

"Oh, indeed," returned the sick man, looking, with a half bewildered expression, at the speaker. "Yes, yes, I remember now; but Mary won't have him—it is a great pity."

"I am glad you think so," returned Oswald. "But she is a very good daughter, Mr. Thornton, and if you were to insist on her accepting me, I am sure, in your present state, she could not refuse to obey you! above all, if she understood that I was willing to pay all your

debts, and make you comfortable for the rest of your life."

"Yes, she is a very good girl," returned Thornton. "She has always been a good girl; but though my head is confused, I remember something about her having another engagement; and Blake told me, I had better keep out of the way, or she would have been married before this."

"But you must not let her marry a man without a sixpence, Thornton," said Oswald, with unusual gentleness.

"Oh no, certainly not," was the reply. "I have no doubt all Mary's relatives will be proud to see her Lady Mallory; but then, I hear Sir Thomas is as deep in debt as I am, so that would not do, either. But where is Mary? she could explain all this to you better than I can. I am very sorry, gentlemen, but my head is rather confused. I am weak—very weak; if I had a glass of brandy-and water, I should, perhaps, feel better."

So saying, Thornton again closed his eyes in a kind of swoon, and lay as still as death for several minutes.

Atkins made a sign to Oswald, and they both withdrew to a recess formed by the garret-window, and then the lawyer whispered—

"He has had one paralytic stroke already—his faculties were probably impaired by drinking, before this accident, and we shall learn nothing more at present. It will be best to leave him alone till morning, to give the medicines time to calm him. If he could sleep, his mind would be clearer."

"It is confoundedly unlucky you have never been able to find out where the girl is gone to;" said Oswald, sharply. "We can do nothing without her."

"I have some idea that I have discovered her new hiding-place," was the lawyer's reply, "and I shall know more before morning. I directed the anonymous letter to her at Ralph

Watson's, and I have set some one to watch where it is carried to."

"Ha, that may succeed!" cried the gentleman, "and I tell you frankly, the more difficulties I meet with, the stronger is my resolve to persevere—I have sworn to have this girl, and nothing but death shall prevent me."

"But your brother is a formidable rival, Mr. Oswald," said Atkins, coolly.

"I never gave up to him in my life, and by Heaven I never will," was the reply, and Mallory struck his cane on the ground as he spoke, unable to repress his passion, even in the chamber of death. "As long as I live, Mary Thornton shall never be Edward's wife."

"Bold words, sir, bold words," answered his companion, shrugging his shoulders; for though Atkins was very ready to transact any business in a sly and sneaking way, he had an extreme aversion to all violence. He had such

a wonderful respect for the law, that though it was the occupation of his life to evade it, he made it a rule never to commit himself by setting it at defiance. "The surgeon is likely to return shortly," he added, looking at his watch, "and I imagine you would not like to be found here."

"Certainly not," replied Oswald, hastily; "but if he thinks the case is likely to prove immediately fatal, you must recall me directly. I shall sleep at the George, and return here the first thing in the morning."

The lawyer approved of this arrangement, and they then descended from the garret together. But though Oswald Mallory left the house, Atkins remained in the tap-room, to keep watch for the surgeon's return. He came in less than a quarter of an hour, and the account he gave, after visiting his patient, was not unfavourable.

"Thornton had slept a few minutes," he

said, "and his faculties were so much clearer, that should no violent fever come on, in consequence of his wounds, he might yet recover; but he hinted, that any recurrence to his habits of drinking, or any violent excitement, must at once prove fatal.

This was a contingency, which gave Atkins very little anxiety. All he desired was to keep the Custom-House Officer alive, till he or Oswald had learnt from him the secret of his daughter's hiding-place, with which they thought he was, of course, acquainted; and until he had frightened Mr. Parkins into paying a round sum to buy off so dangerous a witness of his nefarious transactions.

These two objects attained, by both of which he hoped to make money, he considered that the sooner Thornton departed from this life the better. He recommended him, however, to the landlord's care, when he left the public-house.

Atkins had not advanced many steps along the street, when, to his great surprise, a little girl, in clean and simple attire, came up to him, and making a modest reverence, asked him in a timid voice, if Mr. Thornton had not been carried into the house he had just left.

"Mr. Thornton, child, what do you know about Mr. Thornton?" answered Atkins, with a grin, which he meant to be insinuating, for he was a great admirer of female beauty at any age, and he did not fail to observe, in the lamp-light, that the girl had the brightest eyes he had ever beheld.

"Mr. Thornton has been very good to me, sir," she said; "and I saw him all bleeding in the street. I hope he is not dead, sir?"

"No, not quite dead," was the cool reply.

"Oh, sir," cried the girl, "will anybody

take care of him? I should so like to see him."

"See him, child! What good could you do him, do you think. He has been knocked on the head, and must be kept quiet. I don't suppose he would know you, or anybody else."

"Poor Mr. Thornton," said the little girl, "how sorry I am! indeed, I should like to see him; if you would only be so kind as to take me to him, I should be very, very much obliged to you, sir."

"How come you to suppose that I know anything about him?" inquired Atkins, sharply.

"Oh, sir, I saw you walking all the way beside him, when the police were carrying him here. I lost my father in the crowd, and so I followed poor Mr. Thornton, to see where he was taken."

"And who is your father?" inquired the lawyer.

"My father is a poor man; and Mr. Thornton helped us when we were in trouble," was the little girl's reply.

"And you, no doubt, know his daughter, too?" inquired Atkins, in a careless tone.

"Oh, yes, sir," answered the girl! her eyes sparkling with pleasure.

"Then perhaps you will tell me where she is to be found?"

"No, indeed! she told me I was never to tell anybody," was the child's prompt reply.

And she at once assumed a reserve, very different from her former manner.

"If I were to give you a shilling, you would tell?" returned Atkins, in a coaxing tone.

"I would not tell for a hundred pounds—I would not tell for the whole world," answered

the girl, to whom the value of the one was about as incomprehensible as the size of the other.

"Oh, very well," said the wily tempter, "never mind. I am glad to see you can keep a secret;" and he laid his finger against his crimson nose, with a most expressive glance. "You seem to be a very good little girl; and if you will promise to be perfectly quiet, and ask Mr. Thornton no questions, you shall see him."

"Thank you—thank you—I will do whatever you desire," replied the girl.

And then in obedience to a sign from Atkins, she followed him into the public-house.

There was nothing in this place which either frightened or disgusted the young companion of Atkins, who was no other than Lilly Fuller, for whilst formerly attending her father, in his wandering profession, she had nearly lived in

these resorts of poverty and dissipation. Yet, as she passed the kitchen door, and saw the assembly therein, of low men, who were gambling, and drinking, and brawling in rude voices, and singing with savage glee, her young heart was grieved, that Mr. Thornton should be brought to such a place. But silently she followed her conductor up the creaking, sanded stairs, and at last entered the garret where poor Thornton lay.

The summer sun had been shining all the past day, full upon the tiles above it, so that he heat was still suffocating; a species of torture, endured by many of the poor, but which never occurs to the imagination of the rich.

The nurse was not there, and a jug of water was placed at his bed-side within his reach.

Such water! drawn from the dirty cistern of the house, which had never been cleaned out

for years; it was of a dull, yellow tint, lukewarm, and noxious, even to the smell, whilst thousands of living creatures, engendered by corruption, were swimming so thickly in it, as to be visible even to the naked eye; and this was the only water to be found in all the lodging-houses of the poor in that district; although a water company had expended many thousand pounds to supply the town. There was no open fountain in the place, where a purer stream might be quaffed, and even that which entered the houses must be dearly paid for.

The whole affair was a job and a monopoly, for the benefit of speculators and rich capitalists, whilst no one concerned in it had one disinterested thought for the public good.

Little Lilly poured out a glass of this unwholesome liquid, and held it to the poor man's lips, who in his fever asked for drink; but he did not know her again, and only murmured—

"You are not Mary—fetch me my little Mary."

Atkins looked sharply at the girl, whilst these words were uttered. This was exactly what he wanted; but Lilly made no reply. Her early acquaintance with the worst parts of society had made her discreet beyond her years.

But she looked modestly up in Atkins's face, and enquired if Mr. Thornton had no one to attend on him.

"Oh yes, child," he replied, "I have taken care of him. I got him a doctor and a nurse. The woman is in the house, no doubt. I dare say she has only gone for a minute, or two, to take a glass of comfort, below stairs. But I will sit down beside him till she comes back, and you had better go home, for it is very late, and Mr. Thornton must not be longer disturbed."

"Thank you, sir," said Lilly, meekly, but she did not like Mr. Atkins's face.

Children have a wonderful discrimination in this respect, and it was only after a second command from the lawyer, that she, with slow steps, left the room, for she would gladly have seen, that Mr. Thornton had another nurse.

Suddenly as she closed the door, a new idea rushed upon her mind, and gliding with the lightness of a swallow down the stairs, she hurried with breathless speed, to Miss Thornton's abode.

CHAPTER III.

As evening changed into night, Mary Thornton's anxiety at the prolonged absence of Lilly became very great. Edward and Fuller were also still absent, and she began to think that the actor's apprehensions on his child's account, had not been without a just cause.

She felt, however, much relieved, when Nelly informed her, that Frank Bernard had just been there, to say that he had spoken with Lilly in the crowd, which was following

the bier of the wounded man; and that he had no doubt, she would return home, when she had seen where they carried him. The workman had not seen Thornton so as to enable him to recognize him, or he too, would have gone in the same direction.

"Frank tells me," added the servant, "that the people are furious at Mr. Oswald, for riding off, without making the least enquiry, as to the mischief he had done, and if the workmen were badly off, on short wages, they are starving now, when all the manufactories are closed, and they blame him also, for that, far more than they do his father."

"This is a sad story, Nelly," said her mistress, "but I am glad, however, that the men did not strike, as was talked of at one time. It is a proof, they are getting wiser than they formerly were."

"That is what Frank says," answered Nelly, "and oh Miss Mary, it will be a happy day,

for old England, when poor folks have a right understanding of their own interests; but such fellows as Atkins bewilder their minds till they cannot distinguish between truth and falsehood."

"Hush Nelly, hush," said Mary, holding up her finger, "surely that was the house door shut; and there are steps upon the stairs."

Before the servant could reach the door, it was softly unclosed, and Lilly came gently and silently into the room. Her pretty face was not as usual, bright with smiles; but with an unwonted earnest and sad expression, she came up to Miss Thornton, and took her hand in hers, without speaking.

"Oh Lilly, why did you run away from me, and terrify us all, by staying out so late?" inquired the lady in a tone of gentle reproof.

"Was father frightened?" inquired the child.

"Yes, much frightened, and he declared he

could not rest till you were found," answered Mary; so he and Mr. Edward have gone out, I know not where, in search of you."

"Poor father!" said Lilly, as if her only anxiety had been on his account. "But he will be happy again, when he knows I am safe, and I have such news—such wonderful news, I feel quite certain he can't be angry at me when he knows why I went away."

"But indeed, Lilly, it was not right to stay so late, it is nearly night," replied Mary.

"I could not get back sooner," said the little girl, looking anxiously up in her face. "I could not indeed, dear Miss Thornton, for I wanted to see the poor gentleman, and to know if he was badly hurt."

"What a strange fancy!" returned Mary, regarding the agitated face of the little girl, with astonishment.

"Not so very strange, Miss Thornton," she replied, "for I was running on before father, when the accident happened, and saw it all;

I knew the poor gentleman, who was knocked down."

Lilly's voice trembled as she uttered these words, for the same good sense and delicacy, far beyond her years, which had induced her not to mention the name of Thornton, when she ran back to Mary in the street, made her now fear to tell her abruptly, that the sufferer was her father. Her own devoted attachment to her parent, had taught her to understand and respect the feelings of another.

"Was the poor man a friend of Mathew Fuller's?" inquired Mary, without the slightest suspicion of the truth.

"No, dear Miss Thornton," she replied, "he was a friend of yours, a very—very—dear friend, indeed."

"Good heaven, Lilly, what can you mean!" exclaimed the lady, with sudden agitation. "What friend of mine do you know. Why did you not tell me at once, if you knew any-

thing that concerned me! who, and what, have you seen?"

"Don't be frightened, dear Miss Mary," returned the little girl, taking both the lady's hands in hers, and fixing her large eyes anxiously on her face. "I will tell you all now—I have seen your father."

"My father! my father, say you! wounded, dead perhaps!" was Mary's wild exclamation. "Tell me quickly, Lilly! tell me all! I must know all, even the very worst."

"He is hurt, but not dead, nor dying, as far as I know; only wounded, and very ill," replied the little girl in hurried accents.

"And you have seen him?" asked Mary, eagerly.

"Yes, I thought I knew him, when he was knocked down, but I did not tell you, I was so afraid of frightening you. But I could not be content, till I had seen him nearer, and watched where he was taken to."

"And you have done this?" demanded Miss Thornton, drawing the child close to her, and gazing anxiously in her face.

"Yes!" said Lilly, simply. "I got into the house, and the room where he was lying, and then I was quite certain it was Mr. Thornton. I heard the doctor say, he was in no immediate danger, if he was kept quiet."

"And you can show me the way to the house, where he now is?" demanded Mary, eagerly.

"Oh yes," answered the little girl proudly.

"This is wonderful! May heaven bless you, Lilly!" exclaimed Miss Thornton, whose tears now flowed in abundance, and pressing the little girl in her arms, she did not say that she was astonished at her discretion and presence of mind, but she kissed her again and again, with wonder and gratitude, and she felt, that young as she was, she had tenfold requited all the kindness she had shown her.

But the image of her father soon banished every other thought from Miss Thornton's mind. Though his affection for her had never possessed the intensity of that which united Mathew Fuller and his child, yet Mary had a loving heart, and long after she had lost her mother, which happened when she was very young, he had been the only object of her attachment, and his long and unaccountable disappearance, had cast a gloom, which nothing else could have done, over the bright prospect which had been opened to her, by the the assurance of Edward Mallory's love.

To hasten to him now, was therefore her first impulse, and she was no sooner assured that Lilly could show her the way to Thornton's hiding place, than she sprang from her chair, and snatching her hat, declared they would set off immediately.

It was in vain that Nelly, whose prudence never forsook her, spoke of the darkness and

lateness of the hour, and urged the imprudence of going, she knew not whither, with no better guide than little Lilly, from whose account, it was very plain, that Mr. Thornton had been carried to a house in one of the worst parts of the town.

But when the child recounted all she had seen and heard, and told how repeatedly Mr. Thornton had asked for his little Mary, his daughter would hearken to no personal considerations.

Young as she was, she had a decided will when affection and duty were her impulses; and though indifferent as to most things, when her own interest was alone concerned, she became perfectly obstinate in the service of another.

Even the idea that Edward Mallory might return, and be distressed at her absence, could not deter her from going at once to her father.

Her duty was clear, she said, and the less time she delayed the better. Nelly must tell Mr. Mallory, when he came back, whither she was gone, and then she felt certain he would follow her.

"But where shall I send him to?" enquired the faithful servant, whom nothing but the necessity of awaiting the return of Edward and Mathew Fuller, could have prevented accompanying her young mistress.

"It was a public-house where I went to on the side of the hill above the harbour," answered Lilly. "I have been there with father long ago, and the sign is the Half Moon."

"Oh, Miss Thornton, for goodness sake, don't go to such a place as that," exclaimed Nelly, in utter consternation. "It is one of the worst places in the town. Frank is down stairs, I will send him to see after Mr. Thornton, and take care of him till Mr.

Edward comes back, and can go with you."

"He wants no one but me," answered her young mistress, firmly. "I have no fears, Nelly. I am going to my own father; what can there be wrong in that? I would not hesitate to go, if I hoped to serve him, even if it were to the town prison; so don't try to stop me any longer; only tell Mr. Edward to come to me as soon as he returns."

So saying, Mary Thornton descended the stairs, holding Lilly by the hand, without speaking another word.

Had she been aware of Atkins's presence in the sick room, she might have hesitated, before she hastened thus, unsuspicious and unprotected, into the snare, which the indefatigable agent of Oswald Mallory had exultingly prepared for her.

But unconscious of any evil awaiting her, and strong in the inspiration of duty and affec-

tion, which hurried her into imprudence, the ancients would have said, that she was impelled by fate to work out the accomplishment of her own destiny.

Neither she nor Lilly spoke as they passed rapidly along the streets, where the gas flaming in the shop windows dispelled the darkness of the night; but so entirely was Mary Thornton's mind engrossed by the hope of speedily meeting her father, that she scarcely remarked the difference, when her little guide led her into a dark and narrow lane winding up the hill above the harbour.

"We have not far to go now," said Lilly, "there is the house, Miss Thornton, where the light is shining in the window."

Thus aroused to a consciousness of the present, Mary looked around her, and she involuntarily shuddered, with a feeling of terror, when she observed the squalid misery of all the habitations around her.

But she only hurried on the quicker, and in a few minutes arrived at the door of the Half Moon public-house. As she stood a moment on the threshold, she heard rude voices singing within, and the fumes of tobacco and gin might have made a man of stout heart shrink back, but the girl, and her childish companion, entered without hesitation.

The high and holy purpose, for which Mary had come thither, gave her unwonted courage, although she was ignorant that Frank Bernard, by Nelly's direction, had followed her from her home, and remained near the door, till she had ascended to Thornton's garret.

The workman afterwards entered the kitchen, under pretence of drinking, in order to keep watch over her whilst in that wretched place.

There was no nervous excitement in Mary Thornton, when she passed along the narrow passage of the public-house; there was no vain

sense of self-sacrifice, or merit, in following her wretched parent to the last refuge he had found in his misery and degradation. Inspired by gentle, quiet, patient attachment, her conduct was the result of no sudden impulse, but a necessary consequence of her character.

Softly and unobtrusively she advanced to a decent-looking woman, whom she supposed to be the landlady, and requested to be conducted to the gentleman's room, who had been brought there that afternoon after an accident.

The female stared at her from head to foot, with astonishment, before she gave any reply, for she was unaccustomed to see girls there, except of the very lowest description.

"You are the poor man's daughter, I suppose, Miss!" she said, at length.

"Yes! his daughter," was Mary's simple reply.

And the landlady then, without further de-

lay, preceded her up the narrow, dirty stairs.

Lilly glided after them in silence.

Miss Thornton's heart was very full, but she restrained her tears. She felt a fearful pang, when on entering the wretched garret where Thornton lay, she looked around her, and in the dim light of the tallow candle, saw faintly, the wretchedness and desolation of the scene.

Though she had gone much on charitable errands into the haunts of the poor, she had never beheld any place more forlorn and squalid.

The garret was unceiled, and the rays of a solitary tallow candle failed to penetrate into the deep recesses of the rude and half-decayed old roof, falling only here and there, on beams covered with the dust and cobwebs of half a century, above which boxes and lumber of all descriptions were stowed away in dark confusion.

The walls were discoloured by damp and mildew, and the floor had evidently not been washed, in the memory of man or woman either.

A tattered old horse-rug was poor Thornton's only covering, and the chaff pillow beneath his head was without a pillow-case.

But the fearful change which the few weeks of her father's absence had made in his appearance, when heightened by the bandages around his head, filled poor Mary with absolute horror.

The spectacle far surpassed all her worst anticipations, and the remembrance of the agony she suffered at beholding it, remained for ever, thenceforward, imprinted on her mind; one of those land-marks in the desert of oblivion, which even at the close of life, still remain visible, to point out the course we have passed, when all minor objects have vanished from the memory.

Atkins was no longer there, and Thornton, having sunk into a deep sleep, was unconscious of his daughter's presence. The nurse, weary of her monotonous task, finding that, for the time, her services were unnecessary, had gone down to amuse herself in the bar, so that Mary at once established herself in this woman's place, beside her father's bed.

Greatly did she rejoice, that Lilly's fortunate discovery of his abode enabled her to attend on him, instead of his remaining in his present suffering state, with no one near him, but hired menials, and those of the lowest class.

The landlady having set down the candle she brought up-stairs, said she would send the nurse immediately, but Mary begged her not to do so.

"She should remain there herself, during the night," she said, "and the nurse had better go to bed, for she wished to be alone with her father."

To this the woman assented, only stipulating, that if the nurse slept in another room, her bed must be paid for.

Miss Thornton assured her, that she need have no uneasiness on that score, as the sick gentleman had respectable connexions, who would be ready to remunerate her handsomely for her trouble.

She, at the same time, gave half-a-sovereign in advance, and this at once produced civility.

The landlady then wished the young lady good night, and departed, leaving Mary and Lilly alone with the sick man in the garret.

The fresh loveliness of the child and Mary's placid beauty presented a strange contrast to the squalid misery of the loft and the death-like gloom pervading it. Hand in hand they sat, silent, and awestruck, by the bed of the sleeper, for even young as Lilly was, she felt

all the deep solemnity of the scene. Had she been able to comprehend the story of the man whose life seemed drawing to a close, under such sad circumstances, it would have impressed on her sensitive mind a deep, moral lesson, but Mary, with silent agony, not only now understood the full amount of his misfortunes, but she had a sad and mortifying conviction, that they were more the consequences of his own errors, than of the injustice of others.

A fearful change passed, at times, over Thornton's face, like the shadow of death, and he frequently murmured and groaned in his sleep, as if he suffered pain. The child watched his slightest movement with the deepest anxiety, and Mary felt her little hand tremble in hers at every evidence he gave of agony.

It was the first time she had witnessed extreme sickness; a sad discipline, but one which

can alone teach the heart the reality of the sufferings of others. Yet, from this exercise of sympathy, the rich now wish to exempt their children, and it is the fashion of this class to leave their dying relatives to the hired care of menials.

CHAPTER IV.

The consternation in the town of S—— was very great, when it became generally known that the iron-works, in which Sir Thomas Mallory and Mr. Parkins were partners, were suddenly closed; but when in less than a week, this example was followed by all the other manufacturers, and more than two thousand men were suddenly thrown out of employment, a feeling of terror and discontent pervaded every class. Even those who were

unconnected with trade heard the intelligence with dismay, for they foresaw, that in the distress which must inevitably follow, they would be taxed with a heavy poor-rate to maintain the men, from whose former labours the great manufacturers, who now dismissed them, had alone reaped all the profit.

The artizans themselves, long excited by Atkins, and other incendiaries, were in a very sullen humour, and even their best friends had small hopes of effecting a reconciliation between them and the masters, until the funds of their societies were exhausted. Mr. Gerard and other philanthropists, who interested themselves in the welfare of the people, foresaw, with anxiety, that much evil must in the meantime occur.

To aggravate the general irritation, Sir Thomas Mallory persisted in his design of ejecting all the tenants from the cottages he had so dearly purchased; and as most of these

were labourers out of work, who had no means of paying for the smallest tenement to shelter their families elsewhere, the announcement of this intention excited universal disapprobation and ill-will. Every inhabitant of Collard's Buildings, when a notice to quit was given, either received it in sullen and obstinate silence, or with open expressions of defiance.

All this Parkins knew, and shrewd, calculating and cautious, he fully understood the mischief likely to ensue, if Sir Thomas persisted in such a cruel and oppressive measure, at a time of general suffering and excitement.

On the night of Thornton's accident, he therefore held a conference with him on the subject, and endeavoured by every argument in his power, to convince him of the inexpediency of driving the people to desperation. He did not apeal to his compassion, for he doubted its existence; but he endeavoured to make

him understand the injury which might result to himself, from such profitless severity.

The obstinate old man, instead of being convinced by his arguments, was enraged by opposition; accused Parkins of having a sympathy with the rabble, and vowed that instead of losing further time in hesitation and delay, he would at once resort, if necessary, to violent means, to eject the scoundrels who were now less likely than ever, to pay any rent for his cottages.

The attorney shook his head, but made no reply, for he well knew, that when the Baronet was in one of his obstinate fits, his mind was totally incapable of reasoning, and it was of great importance to himself, that evening, to keep him in good humour.

With all his faculties for business and all his intrigues, the affairs of Mr. Parkins were in a very delicate position. There had been a sudden depression in the share market, and the

run on the Joint Stock Bank was daily increasing.

He had that morning received an intimation from Sir Thomas Mallory, that he intended to remove the three thousand pounds, which he had placed in the Bank a short time previously, after the payment of his most pressing creditors. The object which Parkins then had in view, was to persuade the Baronet to renounce this idea; but though he resorted both to flattery and falsehood, he found the old gentleman inexorable.

In the midst of the conference, Mr. Atkins was suddenly announced. He came to inform Mr. Parkins of Thornton's accident, having previously spoken to Oswald Mallory, by whom he had been well paid for his discovery of the hiding place of the Custom House Officer.

The Baronet, who entertained no suspicion that the lawyer's narrative in any way concerned himself, was exceedingly vexed by this

interruption, and scarcely returning Atkins's salutation, he arose from his chair, and walked impatiently to the window. He wished to show, that he was exceedingly indignant, that the low pettifogger should presume to sit down in his presence.

Neither of the lawyers appeared to notice his insolence. He was fool enough to believe, that he impressed them with a sense of his superiority, whilst he only aroused the bitterest rancour in their hearts. Their self-esteem was not less sensitive than his own.

Parkins glanced a moment at Sir Thomas, with a sneering side glance of concentrated malice, and then arising, led Atkins into another room. When he retired, after a short lapse of time, every trace of servility had vanished from his manner, and with the easy assurance of a man, who is master of his game, he resumed his seat, and began playing with the pens upon his desk.

"I presume you heard Atkins's account of the accident which has occurred, and no doubt you remember, Sir Thomas, who this man, Thornton, is?" he demanded, after a brief pause.

"Yes! a fellow in trade, whom my wife's cousin degraded herself by marrying," replied the Baronet. "There never was any of my family connected with trade before, as I have frequently told you."

"You deserve credit then, for having given your family a good example for the future," said the attorney; "and there will be an end of such confounded pride and folly throughout the whole country, before long."

Sir Thomas stared with amazement, but Parkins appeared not to notice his surprise, and continued.

"It is surely ridiculous in a nation like this, where half the nobility had their origin in trade, and more than half the estates were

purchased by the profits of trade, that the holders of land are to assume a superiority over the holders of money; but extravagance is curing this folly, and our country gentlemen must submit to make their sons traders, if they do not wish them to be beggars. But I am glad to find you remember Thornton."

The Baronet made no reply; he was in a towering passion.

The lawyer waited a few moments, and then added—

"I sincerely rejoice that Atkins has discovered the hiding place of the Custom House Officer, on your account, my dear sir."

"On my account! What do you mean to intimate, Mr. Parkins?" demanded Sir Thomas. "I must say your language this morning is entirely beyond my comprehension.

"I can easily explain it!" answered the attorney, with great tranquillity. "You have

probably not forgotten the estate I purchased from you, about twenty years ago ?"

"What can that have to do with Mr. Thornton," demanded the Baronet, leaning on the back of a chair opposite the lawyer, and turning very pale.

"You shall hear," returned Parkins, in a very deliberate and insolent tone. "You may remember, that I hesitated to purchase this property, it being subject to certain charges, under the marriage settlement of your mother, Sir Thomas Mallory."

"Well ! What then !" demanded the Baronet, with a strange expression of guilt and uneasiness in his large, glassy eyes.

"This happened, as you know, before you came to your title," continued the lawyer, with the same cold tranquillity as before. "The estate was your only property at that time, and I beg pardon for recurring to such circumstances, but I believe you were greatly embarrassed for want of ready money."

"Yes, confoundedly," said Sir Thomas. "I had a debt of honour to pay. But why recur to these old affairs?"

"If I remember right," rejoined the attorney, "you had lost £15,000 at Epsom, and were afraid it should come to your uncle's knowledge, and cause him to alter his will. You wanted me to advance you the money as a mortgage, but I refused to do so, as I was, fortunately for myself, aware of the existence of your mother's marriage settlement."

"Yes, that settlement was a confounded nuisance," answered Sir Thomas, "and it is a horrible injustice to lay such burthens upon land."

"Yet some people think, that younger children cannot be left to starve," said Parkins very sarcastically, "and I suppose your grandfather, when he made his daughter's settlement, was of this opinion."

"But what has all this to do with that

spendthrift Thornton ?" demanded Sir Thomas, with extreme impatience.

"You will hear that before long! but to return to my subject! After further examination of all the circumstances connected with this affair, we began to think, that the marriage settlement was of less consequence than I at first supposed. Both the Trustees were dead, and had never been replaced. Your sister, whom it concerned as much as yourself, died likewise; another person interested therein, had never heard of the existence of such a document; and as it seemed, therefore, little better than a piece of waste paper, we agreed—to destroy it. It was a mistake I admit—but I was young, and anxious to serve you, Sir Thomas, and did not understand the law, as well as I do now."

"It is a mistake from which you have reaped a large profit," said the Baronet. "The estate is now worth more than double the sum you paid me for it."

"Perhaps it is, if the title be secure!" returned the lawyer.

"Who is there can dispute it?" demanded Sir Thomas, eagerly.

"Thornton!" answered Parkins, and he kept his large eyes fixed on his companion's face, to watch the effect his words produced, whilst a slight smile of triumph curled almost imperceptibly, the corners of his thin dry lips.

Though the fact he announced, might compromise his own interests, even more than those of Sir Thomas Mallory, he yet exulted at the opportunity of revenging himself on one to whose insolence and pride he had submitted for a long course of years, in order to secure his ultimate revenge.

The thirst of vengeance had divided this man's soul with the thirst of gold. Meanly born, and meanly bred, he had presumed, before he became master of Sir Thomas's paternal estate, to ask the hand of that gentleman's

sister in marriage; the lady laughed at him, and her brother rejected him with disdain. He had thenceforward pursued them both with unrelenting hatred. He studied the character of the Baronet, he burrowed into the recesses of his proud and foolish heart, he watched and cherished his failings with exultation, and directed them to become the means of his degradation, and ruin.

He had now only one object unaccomplished, and that was to make his daughter the mistress of Stoke Court, or to become himself its master. The obstinacy of Sir Thomas, and the pride of Oswald Mallory, were rapidly driving him to extremities. His heart exulted, therefore, when he saw the agitation his last announcement excited in the proud old man, for he knew that fear alone could bend him to his purpose.

"Thornton, I suspect, has it in his power to ruin us both," he added, in a low voice.

"Thornton!" echoed the Baronet, with trembling and pallid lips, "what can he know of our private affairs?"

"There is a person still living," returned the attorney, "who, as well as your second son, has claims on the estate, and Thornton is aware of this person's existence."

"This is a falsehood, sir!" cried Sir Thomas, lifting the chair near him, and striking it furiously against the ground. "There is no other claimant living, there never was another, besides my sister and my son."

Parkins smiled, but it was a most malicious smile, and then arising and going round to Sir Thomas, he whispered a few words in his ear. The effect they produced was electrical. The old man sunk down on a chair near him, as if he had received a death blow. Parkins laughed, and returned to his former place at the opposite side of the table.

"Just heaven! is it possible that I have

been made unconsciously the partner in such a disgraceful fraud!" murmured the Baronet at length, and as he leant forward against the table, his grey head drooping over his breast, his cheeks as pallid as a corpse, whilst large drops of moisture stood on his brow, a more lamentable picture of humiliation and fear, could not have been imagined. "For twenty-one years," he murmured, "have I been living in hourly danger of exposure and dishonour."

"Surely, that is no new discovery!" replied the lawyer, with calm sarcasm. "You must be well aware, you were a criminal from the moment you consented to destroy your mother's marriage settlement."

"Rascal! serpent!" exclaimed Sir Thomas, shaking his clenched fist in a paroxysm of rage, "you told me I had a right to do it! that there could be no harm in it, if I observed the rights of my second son."

"And have you observed them?" was the bitter rejoinder.

"I always meant to do so," answered the feeble minded man, "I could not pay him when he came of age, having then no ready money, but it is still my intention to leave him an indemnification at my death. I never meant to commit a crime; I have always told you so, but I did not understand the law, and I trusted to you."

"Most men make that excuse, when they commit a fraud," said the subtle attorney, "but a jury would no doubt be surprised to hear a magistrate plead ignorance, as a defence under such circumstances."

"How comes Thornton to have anything to do with the second claimant, if such a one really exists?" demanded Sir Thomas, without noticing this insulting reply.

"That is a circumstance I am not at present prepared to explain," answered Parkins; "but this I can tell you, as a fact, that some years after I had taken possession of the estate, and

shortly after he became a bankrupt, he waited on me, and gave me convincing evidence that he was in possession of such a secret, threatening to publish the story, if I would not assist him in his difficulties. As you may suppose, I thought it prudent to silence him, and got him therefore a place in the Custom House. Since then, I have frequently been obliged to advance him small sums, and have once paid his debts, in order to keep him quiet."

"No doubt it was well worth your while." said the Baronet, bitterly.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Thomas! I had no occasion to make any sacrifices on my own account, because the settlement being destroyed, nobody can produce any legal evidence, sufficient to disturb my title to the estate; but I was anxious to prevent any stories being set afloat, which might affect your reputation. On this account, I have endeavoured to keep this fellow, Thornton, under my

immediate observation, and on this account, likewise, I rejoice, that Atkins has discovered his abode. His habits of drinking render it very unpleasant, for such a man to be possessed of an important secret, and I really cannot pretend to regret, that he now lies in a very dangerous state, and is likely before long to be for ever silenced by death."

"I must see him, without loss of time, and inquire further into this strange story," said Sir Thomas, with an anxious and restless expression of countenance, for though his conscience was not very sensitive, his pride made him shrink from being exposed to the censure of the world.

"You had better not appear in this affair at all, Sir Thomas," said the lawyer, very blandly. "It would make matters worse; you may trust to me; I understand this man's character thoroughly, and have no doubt that I can secure his silence. For the sake of your repu-

tation, I am ready and willing to give myself any trouble; but allow me to add, that in return, I shall expect you to leave the three thousand pounds we were speaking of, a few weeks longer in the Bank."

"If you make a point of it," returned the Baronet, "I cannot certainly refuse to do so, but it is rather a large sum, and I have pressing need of it."

"The delay will be short, and I feel greatly obliged to you, for the accommodation," returned Parkins, who at once understood that he had gained his object.

"I think you said, that some accident had happened to this man, Thornton," returned Sir Thomas. "Where is he to be found?"

"Your son Oswald rode over him in the street, about two hours ago, and he has been carried to a low public-house, where he now lies. I will take care that he is removed to a decenter habitation to-morrow, where his rela

tions can have no access to him. But to-night it is too late to do anything; and there is little reason to fear that he should make any disclosures, for Atkins says that he was intoxicated at the time of the accident, and now lies in a half torpid state."

"But I have heard, that my son Edward is intimate with this Thornton," said the Baronet, "and very distressing consequences must ensue, were he to learn this story."

"Ah, he can do nothing, without the settlement, which no longer exists," returned Parkins, who did not like to acknowledge his own anxiety on this account. "You must not forget, that I am a lawyer, Sir Thomas, and the law is intricate enough for those who thoroughly understand it, to set justice at defiance."

"I hear my son is a dreadful radical, as I always foretold he would be, so I have no pity for him. It is his own fault if he is a beggar,

for had he acted as I desired, he might have been well provided for in the church. He would, no doubt, be a troublesome fellow to deal with, if he ascertained the claims he has upon me."

"Thornton has been for some time in concealment, on account of his debts," said the attorney, "so that I think it probable he has hitherto made no disclosures; he has had one paralytic stroke already, and if he is freely supplied with brandy and water, he will probably have another before long."

Sir Thomas Mallory looked aghast! He began for the first time, fully to understand the character of the man, in whom he had for years reposed implicit confidence, and bewildering apprehensions on his own account, rushed upon his mind.

But that mind was not capable of clearly unravelling the mystery of those terrors, and in a sort of confused dream of debts, and

mortgages, and foreclosures, and insolvency, he left the lawyer's office.

Mr. Parkins, although during this interview, he had carried matters with a high hand, was scarcely less uneasy than the Baronet himself. The smuggling transaction in which he had sought to engage the services of Thornton, had not yet been concluded; although he had made arrangements for the ship to sail to another port, where he trusted the vigilance of the government authorities might be eluded, considerable risk attended the undertaking; and some time must elapse, before any profit could be derived from it, even if fully successful.

The affairs of the Joint Stock Bank were every hour becoming more critical, and the wily lawyer well knew that speedy failure must ensue, if he could not devise some immediate means of restoring the credit of the concern. Himself a shareholder, he had drawn large sums, for various speculations, which

sums, he was at this time utterly unable to replace; much had been lent for the erection of chapels and schools, in order to conciliate a certain religious party, and the directors had accommodated each other to such an extent, that though the bank was justly said to possess a large capital, the greatest part of that capital was locked up in bad debts; many thousand pounds had been lent to Sir Thomas Mallory as a mortgage on the estate of Stoke Court, the interest on which had never been paid for ten years.

As long as Parkins had hopes that Oswald Mallory would marry his daughter, he had sought to prevent a foreclosure, but he now felt, with extreme anxiety, that the time for hesitation was nearly past. From much which he had recently heard, he had strong suspicions that the young man never meant to make Miss Parkins his wife; his own responsibility as a share-holder in the bank, being unlimited, he

well knew that if it once stopped payment, he was a ruined man; and to avert this ruin, the interests of Oswald and his father must be sacrificed. The foreclosure of the mortgage, and the sale of Stoke Court, would at once restore the solvency of the Bank, and open for him a new source of credit.

After a night's reflection, he arose fully prepared to put this plan in execution.

His wife and daughter who despised his pernicious habits, whilst they were content to profit by his gains, paid little attention to his sullen humour at the breakfast table, till on rising to depart, he told the servant that should Mr. Oswald Mallory call there that day, the ladies must be denied to him.

"Heavens father, what new freak is this!" cried Miss Parkins, starting from her chair in the greatest surprise, as soon as they were again alone. "Oswald promised to be here at two o'clock to drive me down to the race-

course, and he will be dreadfully offended, if I fail in my appointment."

"So much the better!" answered her father. "He is an impertinent puppy, and must be taught that we are not such fools as to be his dupes."

"What has put such nonsense into your head?" cried the lady. "I have every reason to be delighted with his attentions, which are most assiduous."

"And most false," rejoined the lawyer, bitterly. "He flatters you to your face, to laugh at you behind your back. You are the common jest of the mess-room, and 'the old attorney's fat daughter and his money-box,' was the last toast he gave at a barrack dinner. If you are disposed ro receive him after such an open and scandalous insult, I am not. My doors are closed against Mr. Oswald Mallory for ever."

"Who could repeat such a story to you?" asked Miss Parkins, eagerly.

"Captain Blake heard it in the town," said her father. "He told it to one of my clerks, as a capital joke, a proof, he said, that the pride of the Mallorys would never submit to an alliance with the daughter of an attorney. I have enquired further, and could tell you twenty such tales, of this insolent aristocrat, if your pride is not yet humbled. So you may look out for another husband, Miss Parkins, as soon as you please, for Oswald Mallory shall never marry my daughter, nor finger a shilling of my money, as long as I can prevent it."

So saying, the lawyer left the room, without paying any attention to the effect his words had produced; and the amiable Miss Parkins, when left to give a free indulgence to her feelings, thought proper to go into hysterics.

CHAPTER V.

WHILST Parkins, during his sleepless night, to save himself from bankruptcy, was planning the ruin of Sir Thomas Mallory, Mary Thornton sat by her father's bedside, in the wretched garret of the Half Moon public-house. Yet the Custom House Officer was still unconscious of his daughter's presence. Little Lilly had lain down on some loose straw in a corner of the loft, and was fast asleep. And Mary, lonely and silent, listened anxiously to the

sounds in the house below, which seemed to indicate that its inhabitants were preparing to go to rest, and she feared, that in all probability, it would soon be closed for the night. She had almost given up the hope of seeing Edward Mallory before morning, when there was a slight tapping at the chamber door.

She eagerly arose to open it, fully expecting that he had at length arrived, but it was unclosed before she reached it, and to her astonishment, not Edward, but Mr. Gerard, stood before her. He appeared so much surprised at finding her there, that he stood for a moment, silently surveying her, before he closed the door.

Mary raised her finger, to make him understand that Mr. Thornton slept. The gentleman understood her instantly, and cautiously approaching the bed sat down in such a position as to have a full view of its unfortunate occupant.

"This is a sad duty for you, Miss Thornton," he said, at length, in a low voice, "and to find your father in such a wretched place, is most distressing. Have you been long here?"

"More than two hours," she softly replied.

"Has Mr. Thornton spoken, since you came hither?"

"No! he has slumbered the whole time."

"It was a dreadful accident, I understand," rejoined Mr. Gerard. "Do you suppose he sleeps, or have his faculties been injured by the fall?"

"I know nothing, answered Mary. "The surgeon had left, before I arrived here."

"And have you no friend to be near you, at such a trying hour?" asked the gentleman.

Mary blushed deeply.

"I had not time to request any one to accompany me hither," she replied.

"And you had the courage to come in the night, to such a place alone?"

"I had no choice, when I heard of my father's danger," she returned. "The little girl who is sleeping on that heap of straw, was my guide and companion," and she pointed to the child, whom Mr. Gerard had not previously observed, as she lay almost invisible in the gloomy loft.

"Mr. Thornton must have been a fond father to be so devotedly beloved," said the gentleman.

And he sighed deeply, for those who were once dear to him, had been long in the grave.

Mary made no reply.

Although both she and Mr. Gerard had spoken in a very low voice, the sounds had probably disturbed poor Thornton, for he moved uneasily on his wretched bed, and then unclosed his eyes.

The first object he beheld, was Mary bending over him, with looks of anxious love. He knew her instantly.

"Mary—my own little Mary! how glad I am," he murmured, and the poor, weak sufferer wept for joy.

The sight of that gentle girl, like the apparition of a guardian angel, awakened all the better feelings of poor Thornton's nature.

"Don't grieve for me, Mary," he continued, when the girl's tears fell on his withered hands, though she was unable to speak from excess of emotion. "I am better now; and even should I die, it may be well for us both. Does Edward Mallory know what has happened?"

"Yes, father," answered his daughter, softly. "I only discovered you by accident; but I left word for him to follow me here as soon as possible."

"By accident!" repeated Thornton. "I

sent—I told them I wanted you—did no one come for you ?"

"No one," returned Mary. "But perhaps those you spoke to did not know where I was to be found."

"True—true," murmured Thornton.

And then, as if exhausted, he closed his eyes, and remained silent for nearly five minutes.

"Mary," he said, at length, "are you married ?"

The girl was startled by this abrupt question, and her voice trembled as she replied—

"Not yet, father !"

"I wish you were !" he said. "You have need of a protector in this bad world, and my life is little worth now."

"Do you suffer, father ?" asked Mary, in an anxious voice.

"Not since the surgeon dressed my wounds,"

he replied. "My head wandered before I slept; but I am better now. The sight of you has done me good. But I have a parching thirst; give me something to drink, dearest."

Thornton raised himself, and leant on one arm, the girl held a broken pitcher of barley water which the nurse had left there, to his lips, and he drank greedily.

When he again lay down, Mr. Gerard approached the bed.

Thornton looked up, and at once recognized his visitor. His eyes flashed with a sudden expression of pleasure.

"Thank you, Mr. Gerard," he said, holding out his hand to the gentleman, as he spoke. "This is a wretched place for you to come to; but it is probably the last time I shall trouble you. I suppose you understand on what account I requested the surgeon to send you here?"

"I suspected it must be something relating to your old secret," was the reply.

"Yes," answered Thornton. "I have kept that secret now for many years, because you assured me, my silence could then injure no one; but the time is coming, when all must be disclosed. I may have passed into another world before then—and even now—I am unable to cope with injustice. I was anxious, therefore, to place these papers in your hands;" and he drew a small packet from under his pillow, as he spoke. "You will find here all the necessary evidence. Long ago I arranged everything in order, in case of accidents, and have always carried this about me. You will understand better than I do, what course ought to be taken."

"The case is very clear and simple," returned Mr. Gerard. "You may rely on my seeing justice done, both for the sake of the living and the dead."

"If my father has any secret to communicate to you, sir," said Mary, in a low voice, "had I not better retire?"

"There is no need!" murmured Thornton, who heard her question. "Those papers explain all; and Mr. Gerard knows enough already to understand my wishes. You will unmask the scoundrels, sir! make them pay up every farthing, if it be possible! they deserve both beggary and disgrace."

"And what do you desire that I should do with regard to Blake?" inquired Gerard, bending down and whispering the word so softly into Thornton's ear, that they were inaudible to Mary, who had withdrawn to the further end of the garret.

"Do what you think best," was the sick man's reply. "If just claims are enforced, he must necessarily know all."

"I feel convinced, from what I have seen and heard of him lately, that he has been much

belied," said Gerard, in the same low tone as before; "his character, I have no doubt, has been villanously misrepresented by those whose interest it was to drive him for ever from his native land."

"He has always acted kindly towards me," returned Thornton, in tremulous accents.

"He may have been driven into evil courses, by the injustice of others," answered the gentleman; "but I cannot believe that he has a bad heart."

"No, no! he has been shamefully used; and when he came forward to rescue me from the snares of that vile lawyer, I was strongly tempted to tell him the whole truth! But I wanted to consult you first."

"And no one else suspects anything?"

"Parkins knows the fact; but not another living soul, except yourself, has ever heard the secret from my lips. When I am gone, Mr.

Edward Mallory must be informed of everything."

"As far as regards the money, there is little chance of his ever obtaining what is justly his due," was Gerard's reply. "We have only a copy of the settlement, the original is probably destroyed; for as Parkins's father was one of the trustees, it was no doubt in his hands."

"Yes, yes," murmured Thornton. "Trustees have proved by their weakness, or rascality, the ruin of many an honest family. I hate the very name of trustees."

"You are quite right," said the gentleman. "The love of money is now so overwhelming a passion, and the bonds of modern friendship are so loose, that trustees can no longer be relied on. The law should take women and minors under its direct protection, and not leave them to the tender mercies of trustees. But you are exhausted, Thornton. We must

talk no more on business to-night. If you wish it, I will return to-morrow."

"Thank you—my old—my last friend," answered Thornton, feebly, and he pressed the hand of Mr. Gerard with deep emotion. "You will be kind to my poor Mary. I have now no other desire upon earth! my course, I feel, is drawing rapidly to a close; my disappointments and mortifications appear to me now like flitting shadows—the past seems short, very short, for I am hovering at the brink of eternity. Ah, Mr. Gerard, it would be better, if we remembered oftener in life, how soon we are to die. But you won't forget Mary, my good friend," he abruptly added, as if the girl's welfare was the idea uppermost in his mind. "She is a pure angel, and has been very kind to me. She is like her mother—pretty—very pretty—but better—far better."

"And will be happier, I trust," returned Mr. Gerard, with a deep sigh.

"Is Blake still in the town?" enquired Thornton, after another long pause.

"I saw him this morning," was Mr. Gerard's reply. "He has not the slightest suspicion that you know anything about this affair; but he asserts that he has claims in right of his wife after the lapse of twenty-one years, and is resolved to enforce them. Are you aware that he has been very active in paying off your debts?"

"What! Captain Blake pay my debts? you astonish me! I knew not that he had the means to do so."

"It is whispered that Mr. Edward Mallory furnished the money," was Mr. Gerard's short reply.

"Noble, generous fellow!" murmured Thornton. "He has done this on Mary's account. Ah, if he had known all! You have, no doubt, heard that he is engaged to her. Would to Heaven, that they may both be as happy as

they deserve. It is a comfort to me, in my last hours, to think that the poor girl will have such a noble and generous protector when I am gone. Soon—very soon—and all will be over."

Exhausted by this long conversation, Thornton sunk back on his pillow, as he uttered these words. Mary, who though too far off to hear what passed, could yet see when he had need of assistance, came quickly and softly to the bed-side, and held to his lips a glass containing a strong restorative, sent by the medical attendant. He eagerly swallowed it, and after a few minutes, gradually revived.

He then pressed Mr. Gerard's hand, thanked him for his kindness in coming to him, and again recommended Mary to his care. He felt inclined to sleep, he said, and would not detain him longer, for he believed it was late—very late.

Mr. Gerard was most unwilling to depart

and leave Miss Thornton alone under such circumstances; but they both saw that her father was restless at his delay, and she strongly urged him to return home for the night, adding that she had, for some time, expected the arrival of Mr. Edward Mallory.

The gentleman, therefore, took his leave, promising to return on the morrow; and Mary remained sitting by the bed-side of the sufferer, whilst Lilly and poor Thornton appeared to sleep.

Strange, wandering thoughts flitted over her mind in that solemn hour; but ever and anon, their connection was broken by the remembrance of Edward Mallory, and uneasiness at his prolonged delay.

From time to time, she still heard unusual noises in the streets—of distant voices, and people running to and fro; but in the house beneath all was still, until, after the lapse of half an hour, steps were audible upon the

stairs. The heavy tread of a man approached the door. Mary sprang up, and glided softly across the room, whilst it was opened from without.

"Edward!" she whispered.

But, the next moment, instead of Edward, Oswald Mallory stood before her.

The instant their eyes met, the girl understood, from the strange gleam in his, that he had been drinking, if not to intoxication, yet to a high state of excitement.

The flutter and agitation of spirits, with which she had awaited his brother, was stilled in an instant, and the girl stood before the bold intruder with a calm and quiet courage, which contrasted wonderfully with her young and delicate figure.

The audacity of Oswald was for a moment daunted. He had not been prepared for such a reception, and the insolent smile he wore when he entered, forsook his lips, when Mary

asked him, with dignified self-possession, how he dared to intrude into that room.

"I have come to speak a few words with you, my pretty coz," he answered, "on a matter which concerns both you and your father. I have been hunting for you this month; for in spite of your foolish behaviour, I have your interest most sincerely at heart. I have, upon my life, and I would gladly do anything to serve you."

"We ask no other service from you, than to be left in peace," answered Mary, in a louder voice, for she saw that Thornton had been awakened by the noise. "I marvel how you dare to enter here, and force yourself into my father's presence, after you have had the cruelty to send an execution into his house, and not content with persecuting him in every way which money placed within your power, and compelling him to elude your pursuit by seeking concealment in the meanest hovels; have

ridden him down in the streets, and left him there to die, without even checking the reins of your horse, to inquire, whether, or not, you had committed murder."

"Go on, Miss Thornton, pray go on," said Oswald, endeavouring to cover his confusion by affected effrontery, "I am delighted to hear how fluently you can talk. You have come out in a new character, it appears, and are quite qualified, as I can testify, to play the part of a female lecturer at the people's Athenæum."

Thornton, aroused by this speech, which was uttered in a loud and mocking tone, with an effort of which he had appeared, a few minutes before, for ever incapable, raised himself in his bed and cried in a voice tremulous from weakness and emotion.

"Pitiful coward, are you not ashamed to pollute the chamber of death by your presence! Are you not ashamed to insult a helpless girl by the side of the dying. But I rave!

The wretch has no shame! Look at me if you dare—look at my pillow stained with blood—look at my wounds—my shattered frame—look at the ruin which is your own work, and if your heart is not all stone, you will depart, and leave me, at least to die in peace!"

It was indeed a fearful spectacle to behold the poor Custom House Officer, once so jovial and florid, now wasted and wan from disease and the consequences of his recent accident, his head enveloped in blood-stained bandages, and a bright patch of red burning on his hollow cheeks, whilst his eyes flashed with passion, and the unnatural light of fever.

Even Oswald Mallory was for a moment appalled by this unexpected apparition, but obstinate by nature, and bent on revenge, he soon recovered his presence of mind, and felt that he had proceeded too far to desist, or to withdraw, without accomplishing the object which had brought him thither.

He had come with the intention to persuade, but he had previously drank freely to give him courage, and no longer master of himself, or able to control his passion, he proceeded to threaten.

"Come, come, Mr. Thornton," he said, "there has been enough of this impertinence. I beg you to remember, that such language is very unsuitable, from a man, who is entirely in my power. I must tell you at once, that I have a warrant from a magistrate, for your immediate arrest, on a charge of smuggling, whilst in the Custom House. The facts are clearly attested. Mr. Parkins the attorney says you have not a chance of being acquitted, and you shall be carried to prison to-morrow morning, as sure as my name is Oswald Mallory, if your daughter does not agree, with your approbation and consent, to become my wife."

"I will sooner die than allow her to make

such a sacrifice!" cried the old man, before Mary could reply. "I have submitted too long to be made the tool of others, and to act against the dictates of my conscience; but my hopes and my fears on earth are now passed, and that innocent girl shall never be sacrificed with my consent, to procure me a few short hours of worthless freedom. I defy your persecution. Take me to prison if you will, charge me with crimes which even merit death, I shall escape you still! My soul will not await your punishment."

With a fearful cry of agony, which rang through the high roof and gloomy rafters, with unearthly shrillness, Thornton fell back on his bed.

"There is only one way now left to me," exclaimed Oswald, fiercely. "I wished to avoid making use of force, but you compel me to do so." And he rushed towards Mary as he spoke.

"Coward, unhand me!" she cried, in a loud voice, and she struggled wildly, whilst Oswald endeavoured to pass his arms round her waist.

Lilly, awakened by the noise, sprang from her bed of straw, and ran screaming to the door, but the people of the house were bribed to pay no attention, whatever might occur.

Mary's utmost efforts to escape from the grasp of her ruthless persecutor, were in vain; half intoxicated, he had lost all fear of consequences, and certain of success, he laughed with a savage consciousness of his superior strength.

At that moment, a tall athletic figure stood suddenly on the threshold of the open door; the man understood at a glance the meaning of the scene before him, and in another instant with one well aimed blow of his massive fist he laid Oswald Mallory prostrate on the ground.

It was Captain Blake.

"There!" he said, coolly, "take that as

the first lesson I have had it in my power to give you, since we met at Mr. Parkins's dinner table. Quick—be off, out of this room, and this house, directly!" he added, when Oswald, who had been stunned, but not hurt, was again on his feet. "Begone, I tell you, or you may have serious reason to repent your cowardice in insulting a helpless girl."

"Were your character that of a gentleman, I should demand honourable satisfaction for this unprovoked outrage!" cried Oswald, with great bluster; "but to punish a low adventurer, other means must be resorted to."

"Yes, no doubt!" answered Blake, with a laugh of infinite scorn; "men who are capable of insulting a woman are seldom fond of fighting. But I despise such an antagonist, so walk off, Mr. Mallory, without more words. There has been too much altercation here already; and if you desire to hear further from

me, it may be in a manner you will not particularly relish! begone, sir, I command you! go without further parley."

So saying, Blake pointed to the door, with an air of such haughty command, that Oswald, feeling that he made a very miserable figure, and glad to escape when no chance of success remained, for once in his life, submitted to a stronger will than his own, and casting a look of the bitterest malice at his bold antagonist, he left the room.

CHAPTER VI.

Mary Thornton, when liberated by the interference of Captain Blake, sunk on a chair, overpowered by terror and agitation. But having drank a glass of water, which Lilly brought her, the consciousness that she had then nothing more to fear from Oswald Mallory, soon restored her tranquillity, and gave her strength to return, though with trembling limbs, to her father's bedside.

Her horror was great, when she found that the old man was still insensible. She tried all the ordinary means of restoring animation for nearly a quarter of an hour; she chafed his hands—she called on him by every tender appellation, whilst her tears flowed thick and fast, and she began to fear, that his eyes were closed for ever in death, when he, at length, showed symptoms of returning life.

"Wine! give him wine!" murmured Blake, who had shown himself a most skilful nurse during the whole sad scene.

And when he found there was none in the room, he pulled a small flask of brandy from his pocket, and mixing a little of it with water, made Thornton swallow it.

This wonderfully revived him; and after he had drank a second time, he lay still and silent, in a kind of lethargy resembling sleep.

It was one of those solemn passages preced-

ing death, when the spirit weary of the struggles of life, seems to pause to gather strength before it takes its measureless flight into the abyss of eternity.

"He must be moved hence as early as possible in the morning," said Blake, in a low voice. "This is no place either for you or him. The people of the house are the creatures of Oswald Mallory, who, by the help of the vile informer Atkins, caused Mr. Thornton to be brought hither, and then enticed you to come to him, that Mallory might have you in his power. But Mr. Edward will soon be here, and will, I am sure, advise you, as I do."

"Have you seen him?" inquired Mary, in low, quick accents.

"Yes, I saw him about half-an-hour ago," was the reply. "He had just heard from your servant, that you were here, and was hastening hither, when he was stopped on his way by a

mob in the high street. There are great disturbances in the town, in consequence of the masters having again refused to listen to any terms proposed by the workmen, and of a report, that the Joint Stock Bank will stop payment in the morning. Mr. Edward, who was trying to persuade the excited populace to return to their homes, was completely surrounded, and will probably be unable, for some time, to extricate himself from the mob; but I well knew the character of this house, and when I heard that you were here, I thought it best to come to you as rapidly as I was able, lest you might be exposed to insult."

Mary, whose nerves had been so much shaken by the events of the evening, that her usual composure had completely forsaken her, made no reply to the seaman's words, but sat silently weeping by her father's bedside, from time to time, anxiously pressing her fingers

on his pulse, or wiping the cold dew from his forehead.

Then did she feel with the deep gratitude of affection, how many years she had been indebted for a happy home, to his kindness and protection.

Of his faults, she had known little, and thought less; she remembered only his gay and pleasant humour, and though she once feared that his misfortunes were the consequences of his errors, she had already forgotten that any blame could be attached to him, and only grieved that his old age should have been embittered by affliction.

But even in poverty and adversity, Thornton, more happy than many of vast possessions and high station, was not left to die alone, without a loving heart to watch over him, or a tender hand to smooth his pillow; for Mary did not shrink from the spectacle of suffering, however deeply it might pain her, but tenderly watching

the dying man, she forgot herself, in the anxiety to alleviate his pangs.

Blake, though rough, and bold to desperation, was harsh by habit rather than by nature, and with a strong sense of justice, there was much tenderness in his heart. The gentle love with which Mary ministered to the wants of the dying man, moved him more than her deep affliction. The image of his own death-bed rose before him, lonely and forsaken, and he almost envied Thornton the affection of his young daughter, which made her cling to him in every affliction, and seemed to have acquired strength from his misfortunes.

This might be selfishness, but it was a selfishness of which the noblest nature need not have been ashamed.

Though all was still in that dreary garret, murmuring sounds of voices and sometimes the running of many feet, and louder cries in the distance, broke, from time to time, the silence of

the night; and eagerly and anxiously did Mary listen to every sound in the streets, till at length, she once more heard steps ascending the stairs, and Edward Mallory, followed by Mathew Fuller, entered the room.

The girl sprang forward, and her lover, whose countenance expressed both hurry and agitation, eagerly grasped her hand.

"Dear Mary!" he exclaimed, "I thought I should never get to you again; though I heard in what a wonderful manner Lilly had discovered Mr. Thornton, more than an hour ago, I have struggled in vain to get here! Is your father much hurt, is he still alive?" he demanded, glancing from Mary's tearful countenance, to the pallet where the sufferer lay, pale and motionless as a corpse, so that the dim light gave him all the appearance of death.

"Yes, Edward! he still lives," she replied, in a low voice; "but though I have been told, that the surgeon who has seen him, has no

apprehension of immediate danger, he has been so excited and agitated, since I came hither, that I dread he cannot long survive."

What has occurred to disturb him thus?" inquired Mallory, who felt from Mary's manner, that she shrunk from relating the whole truth.

But Blake had less delicacy.

"Your rascally brother Oswald has been here," he said, "threatening to have poor Thornton carried before the magistrate, on a charge of smuggling."

"Not in the state in which I see him!" exclaimed Edward, with amazement.

"His wrath is up," rejoined Blake, "and I have no doubt he will seek revenge at all hazards. His cowardly persecution of Thornton, is provoked by his jealousy of you; but I have given him a lesson he will not readily forget."

"Thank heaven I did not find him here,"

said Edward; "I have always dreaded meeting him again, lest he should provoke me to lose that command of myself, which I think it my duty to maintain. Is there any danger of his return?"

"No! no!" answered Blake, "he is too cowardly for that. He wont come within reach of my arm again, but will send others to do his work; yet it would certainly be advisable to remove Mr. Thornton before morning."

"Can he bear removal?" inquired Edward, looking anxiously at Mary, who was again bending over the sick man's pallet.

"There are strong men below who will assist in any way we require," said Blake, interposing, before the girl had time to reply, "it cannot do Thornton any injury, if he be carried with care. The chief difficulty is to know where to take him at this dead hour of the night."

"To Mary's lodgings, or to mine," was Mallory's reply.

"They are both too distant," rejoined Blake, after a moment's reflection.

"Take him to Captain Sayers's," said Mary, softly. "That is close at hand, on the open ground at the upper end of the street."

"But will he receive Mr. Thornton in such a state?" demanded Blake.

"No doubt, he will," she replied. "They are old, and faithful friends, and Captain Sayers is always ready to help all, who are in need."

"Some one must go to him, to call him up, and prepare him for your father's arrival," rejoined Mallory.

"I will set off directly," returned the seaman. "Frank is waiting before the door with another workman, and I will send them up to assist in removing Mr. Thornton, whilst Fuller takes charge of the child."

"I shall be glad to be of use in any way," said the poor player, who, without questioning

any one, had discovered the resting place of little Lilly, and had been sitting on the straw beside her, fondly watching her sleep. "Only tell me, Mr. Edward, what you desire me to do."

"Take your little girl in your arms," answered Mallory, "and carry her to Nelly, at Miss Thornton's lodging. You will probably find me in the morning at the house of Captain Sayers, where I shall be glad to see you. Good night—keep out of the disturbances, and get a few hours' sleep, if you are able."

The actor understood, at once, the propriety of this arrangement, and he immediately took Lilly tenderly in his arms.

"Father, dear father, is that you?" she murmured, as he laid her head upon his shoulder. "Where are we going?"

"Sleep, dearest, sleep; we are going home," he whispered, and gently kissing her, he followed Captain Blake down the narrow stairs.

"My own dear Mary," murmured Edward, as soon as they were alone, "nothing shall induce me to quit you again this night, so take comfort, dearest, and rely upon it, that everything, which is in my power, shall be done for you and your poor father."

"Are you there, Mary?" enquired Thornton, in a faint voice; and reviving from the state of half slumber, half unconsciousness, in which he had lain since Oswald's departure; he unclosed his eyes, and looked vacantly around him.

"Did I not hear some one talking to you?"

"It is Mr. Edward Mallory, father," answered the girl, softly.

"Oh, Heaven be praised! we are then safe —quite safe now," was Thornton's feeble exclamation.

"Yes, Mr. Thornton," said the young man; "be calm, for be assured, that neither you nor

Mary has cause for apprehension whilst I am near you."

"I know it well," returned Thornton, grasping Edward's arm in his burning fingers. "You will take care of that poor girl when I am gone."

"I will guard her as my most precious treasure," was Edward's reply. "But you will recover when you are removed into better air. This is no place for you to remain in; and if you feel equal to bear the fatigue, I have people ready to carry you to a house, where you will enjoy every comfort, and Mary will no longer have any deprivations to suffer."

"Ah, poor Mary, that is true," replied Thornton, as if first recollecting where he was; "this house is not a proper place for a young girl like her. You are right, Mr. Edward, she must have a better lodging. But I cannot be moved. I require nothing more now but to die here in peace."

"Then do not send me from you, father," said the girl, kissing the old man's hand, whilst her tears fell thick and heavily upon it.

"No, no, Mary!" murmured the sufferer, "you shall never leave me more—never more whilst I live. You will take her hence, Mallory, when I am gone. A little while—only a little while—and we shall part for ever."

"Have better hopes," said Edward, kindly. "I can easily have you carried to a better lodging, and the change, I hope, will do you good."

"Never—never—it is too late," murmured the dying man. "Lift me up! let me look at the sky once more—let me see the stars."

Mallory opened the casement, and he and Mary passing their arms beneath poor Thornton's pillow, they raised him on his bed, so that

he could see a wide expanse of sky without.

They saw that his countenance brightened with pleasure, as he gazed on the unclouded firmament, and his lips moved in silent prayer. He did not speak; but he felt, with unutterable awe, that he gazed for the last time from earth upon the wide expanse of Heaven.

Gradually his eyes grew dim, and his arms became stiff and cold.

"Heaven bless you, Mary," he said, as he sunk back on his pillow. "You have been as kind to me as if you had been my own daughter."

"I am your own daughter—your own devoted child," answered the girl, softly, and she again pressed her lips on his cold hand, whilst her tears flowed unrestrained.

"No—no—it was all a cheat! You are not my child," returned Thornton, in almost in-

articulate accents. "Ask Mr. Gerard! he will tell you all! Heaven bless you—happy—happy—eternity."

These were the last intelligible words pronounced by poor Thornton; but still he continued to breathe heavily for nearly an hour, and during this time, his eyes, though fixed and glassy, had an expression of unutterable peace and joy. But he never moved; though he still lived; his work on earth was done; and as Mary and Edward knelt, in anxious silence, by the side of his bed, their hearts were impressed with a feeling of solemn awe, as if their spirits, likewise, were hovering near the brink of eternity. Though they spoke not, they offered up sincere and earnest prayers for the dying.

At length, poor Thornton ceased to breathe. The spirit had escaped from its worn out tenement of clay.

After a brief time devoted to prayer, and

the first overwhelming burst of grief, Edward Mallory summoned Frank Bernard and his companion to take charge of the corpse. Then, with words of kindness, and gentle force, he drew Mary from the chamber and the house of death.

So rapid and unexpected had been the events of the night, that the poor girl, stunned, and bewildered by her sorrow, yielded without opposition to Mallory's wishes, and, as supported by his arm, she was hurried along the street at his side, she ceased to weep; she scarcely understood what had happened, or whither she was going.

At length, they reached the house of Captain Sayers, and Edward told her that, from the light burning in the parlour-window, it was evident the officer expected them; she had better remain under the shelter of his roof during the remainder of the night.

"No, no!" she eagerly returned. "Take

me home, dear Edward! I long for the peace of home, Nelly is no doubt anxious about me, and I shall rest better there than in a strange place. It is not much further."

"We must first tell the Captain what has happened, dearest," was Mallory's reply, "and after that, I will conduct you, where you please."

Mary felt he was right, and made no farther objection to this arrangement.

When Mallory knocked for admission, the door was opened by the navy officer himself, who was up, and anxiously awaiting Thornton's arrival.

"Where is my old friend?" he inquired, raising high the candle he carried in his hand, and peering past them into the darkness.

"We are alone," answered Mallory, in a sad voice.

The old officer looked anxiously from him to Mary.

"Is your father not coming?" he demanded.

"He has already departed on a longer journey," replied Mallory, whilst his companion covered her face and wept convulsively.

"Surely—surely—he is not dead?" asked the officer, with consternation.

"His trials here are indeed over!" said Edward, with deep emotion. "Let us hope that he has found mercy, and is at rest."

"You shock me! My goodnatured old friend to die in such a place, and overwhelmed with trouble! It is terrible, very terrible!" exclaimed Captain Sayers, in broken accents. "But come in, pray come in! poor Miss Mary, I am truly grieved for you; greatly distressed upon my honour! come in."

Mary and Edward silently complied with this request, and followed the Captain into his little parlour. Blake, who was sitting there, arose as they entered.

"What, are you come alone?" he exclaimed, with surprise, but a glance from Edward Mallory, at once explained to him what had happened, and casting one look of compassion at Mary Thornton, he resumed his seat in silence.

"Sit down my dear young lady, sit down," said Captain Sayers, kindly taking the girl by the hand. "My housekeeper is preparing a bed for you. You are heartily welcome, upon my word."

Mary complied with this request, and endeavoured to restrain her tears, and to thank her father's old friend for his kindness.

"You have had a great affliction, and I have had a great loss, my dear Miss Thornton," he replied. "My poor old friend and I spent many happy evenings together, but we shall have no more little suppers. So does this world pass away like a dream," and the Captain wiped his eyes. "My turn will come

next, no doubt, which will be a remarkable coincidence. But let us remember, it might have been worse. After all your father's misfortunes—and the mistakes—and—and—"

Poor Captain Sayers had got into a sentence he did not know how to finish, he did not like to say that his old friend had committed faults, so he muttered something about better days, and was then silent.

"Oh yes, I know I ought not to grieve, that his troubles are at length over," answered the girl simply. "But there is something else, which afflicts me greatly. Mr. Mallory, tell them what my father said, for I cannot!" she added turning with an imploring look to Edward, and weeping more violently than before.

"Dear me, Mr. Edward, what can she mean?" inquired Sayers, eagerly.

"Strange to say," replied Edward, "Mr. Thornton declared, in his last moments, that

Miss Mary was not his child, and only an adopted daughter."

Both Blake and the old Captain uttered exclamations of astonishment, at this unexpected disclosure.

"In all probability the poor man's mind was wandering at the last," said the seaman.

"Not in the least," rejoined Edward. "He lamented that he had delayed too long, to disclose this mystery, but referred us to Mr. Gerard, for its full elucidation."

"A most extraordinary story indeed!" exclaimed Captain Sayers, in utter amazement.

The entrance of the housekeeper who came to announce that Miss Thornton's bed was ready, interrupted the old gentleman's expressions of astonishment. But Mary declined the offered hospitality, and again expressing her desire to return home, Edward offered to accompany her without further delay.

But as he well knew that the Inn, where he

lodged, would, at that hour, be closed for the night, he gladly accepted the Captain's invitation to return, and remain there with Blake, until the morning.

The old gentleman himself, who had been considerably excited by the events of the night, endeavoured to compose himself, after the departure of the young people, by swallowing a glass of rather strong brandy-and-water, after which he retired to bed, and soon fell fast asleep. But in his dreams, the form of Thornton haunted him; for the sudden death of his old companion had deeply impressed his mind with the mournful truth, which we are all apt, in the bustle of life, to forget—that the dead are only gone before us, in a path where we must shortly follow.

As Miss Thornton had anticipated, Nelly was still astir, and having heard from Fuller, on his return with Lilly, of the dangerous state of Mr. Thornton, she was anxiously awaiting some tidings of her young mistress.

Such humble friends are often our best consolers in affliction, and after Edward's departure, poor Mary, supported in Nelly's arms, and sure of her sympathy, poured forth all her sorrows to her faithful attendant.

This good woman was as much surprised as the girl herself had been, when she reported to her, the declaration of the dying Thornton, that she was not his child. But Nelly could give her young mistress no information on the subject, and advised her to think no more of words which were probably the mere wandering of delirium, though Mary could not be persuaded to believe that such was in reality the case.

The servant herself admitted, that Mr. Thornton had some mysterious business, with a gentleman, whom they had both recognized, when, enveloped in a large cloak, he came to hold a midnight conference with the Custom House Officer.

"My father said, that Mr. Gerard could explain everything," returned Mary.

"This man, you know, was not Mr. Gerard, but Parkins the attorney," answered the servant, in a voice which made her mistress shudder, "and oh, Miss Mary, you had better be a workhouse child, than have such a father, as that wicked man."

It may well be supposed that Nelly's last words, though kindly meant, only increased Miss Thornton's agitation of mind, and when she at length consented to lie down, it was in vain she attempted to sleep.

She was grieved above all, that Thornton's corpse was left to the care of strangers, and though Nelly assured her, that Frank Bernard would watch it as carefully as if it was that of his own father, she could only soothe poor Mary's excited feelings, by promising to go herself on the morrow, to see that all due attention had been paid to the dead.

CHAPTER VII.

Captain Sayers and his guests breakfasted at an early hour, on the morning after these events. They conversed much and earnestly concerning poor Thornton and his daughter, and Fuller was sent to request Mr. Gerard to join them, in the hope that he might be able to give some satisfactory explanation, of the last words of the dying man.

Though Captain Sayers and Blake both asserted, like Nelly, that no weight should be

attached to these wanderings of an exhausted mind, Mallory had strong reasons for disagreeing with this opinion. He waited anxiously for the arrival of Mr. Gerard, not only because he was more interested than any one else in the fortunes of Mary Thornton, but because he suspected, that he had even a closer connexion with this mystery, than any one supposed.

He spoke little during the time of Fuller's absence, and the rapid glances which Blake cast at him, from time to time, convinced the seaman that the thoughts which engaged his mind, were of the deepest importance.

But Captain Sayers, unconscious of this, continued to babble on, concerning his lost friend, and to compare the time when he had been a man of wealth and importance, with the last sad hours of his existence. He protested that Thornton's ruin was a strong proof of the degeneracy of the time; having been entirely brought about, by that abominable system of

credit, which undermines the very foundations of commerce, and converts even honest men into gamblers.

"It made poor Thornton the victim of that grasping intriguer Parkins," he said. "I am afraid his conscience was gradually blunted by the dealings they had together. Poor man, he always cried up the present, as a glorious time, for he expected hourly to make a fortune by some happy chance, but he was a bad representative of the progress of the age."

As the old Captain uttered these words, Mr. Gerard was announced. Fuller who accompanied him, would immediately have withdrawn, but a sign from Edward Mallory detained him; and in obedience to a few whispered words from that gentleman, when the rest of the party were seated around the table, he also drew a chair near them.

Mr. Gerard was the first to speak.

"Having heard of poor Mr. Thornton's

death during the night," he said, "I was not surprised by the message which Fuller brought me, to wait on Captain Sayers, with whom I am his executor jointly with Mr. Edward Mallory, of whose engagement to his daughter, he informed me during our last interview."

Mr. Blake at these words, arose.

"I perceive, Mr. Gerard," he said, "that I am an intruder here. I beg your pardon; but being connected by marriage with the deceased, I remained by Mr. Mallory's invitation, to hear certain circumstances explained, without remembering, that there was other business which must likewise be discussed."

"And I again request you to remain, Mr. Blake," rejoined Edward, in a most decided tone. "I have reasons for so doing, which, when explained, will, I doubt not, obviate all objections on the part of these gentlemen."

"I also have very strong reasons," said Mr. Gerard, "not only for urging Mr. Blake

to resume his seat, but for rejoicing in the accident which has occasioned him to be present at this conference."

The seaman made a slight bow; but though he again sat down with as calm a manner as he could assume, his countenance was strongly expressive both of surprise and curiosity.

Mr. Edward Mallory now addressed Mr. Gerard.

"I took the liberty of requesting your presence here," he said, "not as one of the executors of Mr. Thornton's will, but in consequence of his having referred me to you for an explanation of an assertion he made in his last moments, that Miss Thornton was not his child."

"Did he make this disclosure to the young lady herself?" inquired Gerard, playing with a small packet of papers he held in his hand, as if his thoughts were so deeply en-

gaged, that he was unconscious of his reply.

"Yes," replied Mallory. "It pained her deeply, that even in the wandering of his fancy he should have denied their relationship at such a solemn moment."

"It was no wandering of his fancy; it was truth," replied Mr. Gerard, in a most impressive tone.

"Good heaven! can this be possible!" exclaimed Edward, eagerly.

The rest of the company remained silent, but awaited a further explanation with intense curiosity.

"You are probably ignorant, Mr. Edward," resumed Gerard, "that your grandfather's marriage settlement contained certain clauses which entailed a part of his wife's property on her grandchildren, on their attaining the age of twenty-one."

"I have lately been so informed," replied

Mallory, casting a quick glance at Fuller, who returned it by an extraordinary look of intelligence.

"Then perhaps you have evidence of the fact?" demanded Gerard, quickly.

"I have," was the quiet answer; "indisputable evidence."

"I rejoice to hear this, as the proof of your claims will substantiate beyond dispute, those which it is my duty to prefer for another. You are probably aware, that an estate sold by your father, Sir Thomas Mallory, to Mr. Parkins, was charged with the sum of ten thousand pounds, for the purposes of the settlement, of which we have spoken."

"Do you mean to intimate, that besides my brother Oswald and myself, there is a third claimant in existence?" demanded Edward, eagerly.

"I do!" was Mr. Gerard's reply. "There is a

third grandchild, and that grandchild is Miss Thornton."

Blake sprang from his chair as if electrified! his hands were clenched, his countenance fearfully agitated; but he had not power to utter a syllable, though the wild expression of enquiry in his eyes resembled the eagerness of insanity.

"Yes," resumed Mr. Gerard, whilst he gazed intently at the seaman, "in these papers I possess indisputable evidence, that the girl, commonly known as Mary Thornton, is the sole surviving child of Edith and John Blake!"

"She is my daughter!" cried the seaman, in a voice which thrilled through the hearts of all present.

"Yes, your daughter!" replied Mr. Gerard, with a calm and beneficent smile.

Scarcely had he uttered the words, when Blake, as if struck down by some invisible power, fell insensible to the ground.

Though Edward Mallory was greatly agitated by this disclosure, yet as, since Thornton's death, he had, in some degree, anticipated it, he felt it less keenly than the seaman. Mary was still, under any name, the same to him. She was his promised wife, the chosen and beloved companion of his future life, and the discovery of their near relationship, could neither increase nor diminish the closeness of the ties which already united them.

With Blake it was far otherwise. The man, who had long concealed a broken heart and the painful sense of his separation from all human ties, under a rough exterior, and had striven to forget his solitude, in a life of wild adventure, was overwhelmed by the sudden tidings that the child, of whose birth, (though he had suspected it,) he had never been able to obtain the slightest proof, was still in existence, and about to be restored to him.

Fuller, with his usual readiness, brought water, and, after a few minutes, the seaman revived.

"My daughter! did not some one say that pretty Mary Thornton was my daughter?" were the first words he uttered, as he gazed around, like a man awakened from a dream.

"Yes, Mr. Blake, it was I made this assertion," replied Gerard.

"Wonderful! most wonderful!" exclaimed the seaman. "By my soul, it is more than I deserve! does the girl know she has such a scapegrace of a father, or has she already renounced him?"

"Mary is yet ignorant of her real parentage," said Mallory; "but with your consent, she will soon be my wife; and be assured, that though you may have been driven by injustice to adopt a wild career, I shall never object to a father-in-law, of whose generous feelings and

honest kindness of heart, I have had so many proofs."

"Heaven prosper you—you are a noble fellow, after my own heart!" cried the sailor, and grasping Edward's proffered hand, he shook it with the warmest cordiality. "Now, Mr. Gerard," he continued, turning to that gentleman, "let us hear how this long deceit has been practised, and wherefore I have been robbed of my only child for nearly half a life?"

"It is a long story," answered Mr. Gerard; "but I will relate it as briefly as possible. The father of Mr. Parkins was one of the trustees to the marriage settlement of your wife's father and mother, the grandfather and grandmother of Mr. Edward Mallory. When Mr. Parkins succeeded to his father's business, and the settlement came into his hands, both the trustees were dead. Sir Thomas, then Mr. Mallory, was in difficulties, and Parkins refused

to advance him money, his estate being charged with the sum of ten thousand pounds.

"Of this I was informed by Mrs. Blake herself. This poor lady, during the absence of her husband, and some months before her expected confinement, was removed, by the wish of her brother, or rather of Parkins, under whose direction Sir Thomas acted, to a town at a considerable distance from hence. She there died in childbed.

"This I, with great difficulty, discovered; but I was utterly unable to find any traces of her child, till Thornton, one evening, when he had indulged somewhat too freely in his favourite vice, disclosed to me that Parkins had cancelled a debt he owed him, of a thousand pounds, and engaged to pay him a small annuity for life, on condition that he adopted it as his own. His wife, he said, who was a distant relative of Mr. Blake's, and had been

with her at her confinement and her death, well aware of his embarrassed circumstances. had favoured the deceit; but he had taken the precaution to have the child christened by its real name, and to get a certificate of its birth from the medical man who brought it into the world.

"When I heard that Mr. Parkins had purchased Mr. Mallory's estate for a mere trifle, I understood why the birth of Edith's child had been thus concealed," continued Mr. Gerard; "but, as its claims could not be enforced before it had attained the age of twenty-one, I advised Thornton to guard the secret carefully till that time, when I promised to assist him in recovering its lawful inheritance. You, Mr. Blake, are aware, that for more than seventeen years no tidings whatever were received of your existence."

"It is perfectly true," replied the seaman. "Soon after I left England, I received a letter,

professing to be written by my wife's orders, renouncing all further connection with me, and though I afterwards heard of her death, I was never able to obtain any exact information. I had then nothing to induce me to remain in England; and though, in the course of trade, I sometimes brought a cargo thither, it was never under my real name. It is now more than six months ago since I received an anonymous letter, informing me of the existence of this said marriage settlement, and my claim to something more than three thousand pounds, in right of my wife, if I could prove that she had left no child. I came to England, I applied to Parkins; but he denied all knowledge on the subject, and added, that the story was, no doubt, a fabrication."

"It was I, Mr. Blake, who wrote you that letter," said Mathew Fuller, now advancing to the table. "I wrote also to Mr. Edward

Mallory, as he knows; but when I explained to him the nature of the evidence I possessed, and he understood that if he asserted his claims, the honour of his father would be compromised, he refused to take any futher steps in the business."

"But why have you never applied to me?' demanded Blake. "Your letter brought me from America, and I was yet unable to discover any trace of its author."

"Mr. Edward Mallory had relieved my distress," replied Fuller, in some confusion; "I clearly understood that he did not wish his father to be brought into trouble, so I never mentioned your claims to him; and I thought I might as well let you wait Sir Thomas Mallory's death, till I informed you that the marriage settlement, by which they are secured, was in my possession."

"Good Heavens! can that be possible!" exclaimed Gerard and Blake at the same moment.

"A most wonderful coincidence," said Captain Sayers.

Edward Mallory bent down his head to conceal his emotion. He felt, with deep sorrow, that he could no longer avert the disclosure of his father's weak participation in the crime of Parkins.

The actor understood his feelings, and he rejoiced that by his means, the just claims of his benefactor must be acknowledged, in defiance of all his generous scruples, and his forbearance towards a father, who had, in many ways, most deeply injured him.

"Yes, gentlemen," said the actor, with honest exultation, "I am proud to say, I saved the important document from destruction, which I now lay before you."

As he spoke, he drew a paper parcel from his pocket, and unfolding its outward covering, he spread several sheets of parchment upon the table.

At one corner they were all shrivelled up and discoloured with smoke, as if they had been exposed to the action of a strong heat.

All present, except Edward Mallory, expressed their astonishment.

"I was bred to the law, gentlemen," said Fuller; "and was some years in an attorney's office. That attorney was Mr. Parkins. During his father's life-time, I had been employed to make a copy of this deed."

"Which copy is probably the one in my possession," said Mr. Gerard. "It was confided to my care by Mrs. Edith Blake, before she left this neighbourhood, and she enjoined me, in case she did not survive the birth of her child, never to disclose my knowledge of its claims till it attained the age of twenty-one."

"I am glad you have the copy, sir," said the actor, "as it will place the validity of the original document beyond all doubt. If you

will allow me, I will now tell you, how it fell into my hands."

"By all means; let us hear the story!" were the exclamations uttered by all present, except Edward.

Every new fact which was disclosed increased his shame and his distress of mind.

"One day as I sat writing in Mr. Parkins's inner office," resumed Fuller, "he came into the outer room, with some one, whom I soon knew by his voice to be Mr., now Sir Thomas, Mallory. They had a long discussion about the purchase of an estate, and I understood that the settlement which I had copied, was the only impediment to the conclusion of the sale.

"When Mr. Mallory left the office, Parkins attended him to the door. It was winter, and there was a great deal of ice on the steps.

"After the gentleman was in his carriage, Mr. Parkins went to whisper some last words in his ear, and in returning, he slipped and fell. His ankle was sprained, and he was carried in great pain into the dining-room. As soon as they were gone, I rushed through the private office, to avoid his discovering that I had been a listener to their conversation. Yet, in my haste, I did not fail to observe, the settlement of which they had been discoursing smouldering beneath the grate from whence it had fallen. I snatched it up, eager to save it, if possible, from destruction. Mr. Parkins's accident gave me time to conceal it unobserved, and as no questions were ever asked on the subject, I presume the lawyer supposed, that the deed was consumed as he intended."

"Wonderful, most wonderful!" exclaimed Captain Sayers; "and a striking confirmation of my previous opinion, that trustees are not

to be depended upon in our present artificial state of society."

"I knew enough of the law," resumed Fuller, "to be aware, that no use could be made of my secret, till Mr. Edward Mallory had attained the age of twenty-one, and several years after that period elapsed before I could discover where either he or Mr. Blake was to be found. I fell into misfortune and poverty, and though I originally only preserved the parchment from a sense of right, I confess I have regarded it latterly as a means of securing a provision for my only child. I have never thought of demanding any other payment for it; and Mr. Edward, though he would make no use of my evidence for his own advantage, has relieved the worst anxiety which preyed upon my mind, by taking my poor little Lilly under his protection."

"He has done right, perfectly right," said Mr. Gerard. "All who have an interest in

this unfortunate affair, are deeply indebted to you, not only for your services, but for your secresy, and the fortitude with which you endured poverty, rather than sell yourself to Parkins. This was virtue, Mr. Fuller, and virtue which richly deserves reward."

"I can well understand your feelings, Mr. Mallory," said Blake; "and if my daughter is to become your wife, be under no apprehension that I shall publish your father's dishonour. I have not forgotten, that when you believed poor Thornton to be her parent, you sacrificed the greatest part of your hard-earned fortune to liquidate his debts. I am proud to be able to requite your noble generosity as it deserves. I, too, have been industrious, and can give my child a decent portion from the profits of honest toil."

"I thank you from my heart for this generous consideration for my feelings as a

son," replied Edward, pressing the hand of Blake, with warm emotion.

"Mary owes you a large debt of gratitude, Mr. Mallory," answered the seaman.

"She owes me nothing which has not been tenfold repaid by her love," answered the young man, in a low voice. "We seemed to know by intuition, from our early childhood, that we were near kindred," he added, with a look of inexpressible happiness; "and I trust before long, we shall be united by the nearest of all earthly ties."

Where is the young lady?" inquired Mr. Gerard. "After the disclosure which Mr. Thornton made last night, the sooner she is informed of her real position the better; and I think you will agree with me, Mr. Blake," he added, with a smile, "that Mr. Edward Mallory is the best person to whom we can confide the task."

"You are perfectly right," was the seaman's

reply, "and I have only one condition to make, which is, that he will prepare her, as quickly as possible, to receive me as a father."

"I thank you for this proof of your confidence," said the young man, arising. "I will go at once, and break the matter to her, as tenderly as I can, for it will, no doubt, distress her, to learn that Thornton and his wife, whom she tenderly loved, have so long deceived her."

"Where does she lodge?" demanded Blake.

"At the gardener's house in the field, above the end of Collard's Buildings," was the reply. "She would not accept of any pecuniary assistance from me, and insisted on living in a humble dwelling, for which she belived she could pay with the profits of her own industry."

"For the future, she will have no excuse

for such humility," said Blake, "and we must remove her as soon as possible to a better part of the town."

"I shall be glad when she has left that neighbourhood," returned Edward, "for all those streets have been in a very disturbed state since the workmen were dismissed, and matters will soon, probably, be worse than ever."

"I heard, as I came hither," rejoined the seaman, "that news came to Parkins this morning by the telegraph, announcing to him the loss of fifty thousand pounds, by the failure of a London Bank, and that, in consequence, the Joint Stock Bank immediately stopped payment. The ruin amongst the middle classes is fearful, and Parkins, who is a principal shareholder, has not only dissipated his own property, but owes an enormous sum to the Bank, which he has no means of paying."

"I am not surprised," returned Captain Sayers. "It all arises from that unsound system of credit, which people call national prosperity."

"The distress of the workmen will be fearfully aggravated by this new calamity," said Mallory, "for the funds of the Trade Union, on which they relied for support, till they brought their masters to accept their terms, were in this unfortunate Bank."

"I heard that Atkins drew the whole sum last night, and has decamped with it," rejoined Mr. Gerard.

"Nothing is more probable," said Blake. "These incendiaries only flatter the passions of the workmen, to make a profit of their impatience, and their foolish attempts to emancipate themselves, by petty struggles, from a gigantic social evil, entailed on them through the lapse of ages, and only to be lightened by the concentrated moral force of their whole class."

"It is to be hoped," replied Gerard, "that successive failures will finally teach the people what the advice of their best friends has hitherto failed to do, that nothing but universal association and economy can place them in a position capable of resisting advantageously, the tyranny of capital."

"There is a report current in the town," said Fuller, "that Mr. Oswald Mallory intends to drive all the tenants out of his father's cottages in Collard's Buildings in the course of to-day, and if so, there will be a terrible riot; for they are all workmen out of employment, and are prepared to resist. They say they have no place to go to with their families, and cannot remain in the streets."

"We must get Miss Thornton away, then, without further loss of time," said Edward, "for her lodging is close to this wretched street."

All present were of the same opinion; and

Blake, Fuller, and Mr. Gerard, proposed to accompany Mr. Mallory directly to Mary's lodging.

Captain Sayers would have done the same; but though he felt himself of vast importance, and was in a state of most happy excitement, since such wonderful disclosures had been made at his house, he had still the discretion to suspect that his company could be dispensed with at the first meeting between Blake and his daughter; moreover, as he had invited the whole party to return to dinner, he had certain consultations to hold with his housekeeper, which he foresaw were likely to give him sufficient occupation during the rest of the morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was indeed true, that during the night of poor Thornton's death, the vile informer, Atkins, after urging the workmen on to open collision with their employers, had absconded with the whole of their funds! When this became generally known, the desperation of these poor fellows was excited to the highest pitch; for they now saw no alternative before them but starvation, or the workhouse.

Yet still they clung to their homes, with that strong attachment and sturdy pride which is the true characteristic of honest English hearts.

For some time past, it had been a gloomy spectacle for those who, like Mr. Gerard, felt sufficient interest in the welfare of the people to visit them in their calamity, to see stout men sitting pining in silence by their fireless hearths, whilst the wives, wasted and wan, were vainly striving to pacify the children, who cried aloud for bread. Every decent article of clothes had been sold to supply scanty food, and even the better articles of furniture, once the honest pride both of husbands and wives, disappeared at length. The clock, and the dresser, and the feather-bed, were the last things parted with, in the extreme of insupportable misery. No one dared to think of what was to follow.

Rent they were unable to pay, but though

they received notice to quit at the end of a week they still hoped that their landlord—the Baronet—the great landed proprietor—their former employer, who had derived large profits from their labour, would have mercy on them in their trouble, and trusting them for this small sum, till better days came round, would not turn them out with their families, to sleep by the hedge sides.

But even this reliance was destroyed, when the afternoon before Thornton's death, the agent of Sir Thomas went round from house to house, along the whole miserable street, to give the starving inhabitants warning, that as the week's notice expired on the morrow, they must either quietly depart, or be compelled to do so.

About half an hour afterwards Mr. Oswald Mallory himself appeared, at Collard's Buildings. He knew that the brother of Miss Thornton's servant, Nelly, occupied one of the

houses, and he was convinced that this man had greatly assisted to conceal Mary's residence during his previous search for her. He knew also, that his brother Edward deeply interested himself in the distresses of the discharged workmen, and it was some gratification to his vengeful heart, to annoy him by their persecution.

He felt no touch of pity, as he passed up the street, though the wan and eager looks of the half starved women and children, and the general aspect of misery around him, gave appalling evidence of human suffering. But he whistled and switched his cane with light indifference as he went along, without apparent consciousness of the horrors of the scene. At length he stopped before Ralph Watson's door, and without knocking, abruptly lifted the latch and walked into the cottage.

There was scarcely any furniture in the room he entered, and the woman who sat rocking a

querulous baby on her knee, whilst three pale and ragged little children crouched at her feet, was evidently in such deep distress of mind, that she only looked up for an instant, and then took no further notice of the intruder. Her husband, who brooded in gloomy silence, beside the empty fire-place, arose with a scowl, and demanded of Oswald, what he wanted there.

"I wish to speak a few words with you," replied Mallory, abruptly. "You have heard that you are to leave this place to-morrow, and that if you do not go willingly, you will be made to tramp."

"Yes," replied Ralph, sternly. "I have heard the merciless decree; but that lesson was not necessary, to teach me that the poor are only a weed upon the face of the earth, which such as you would gladly mow down by thousands, to secure their own enjoyments. I have long known, there is no room for us, and

I cursed the day when my children saw the light."

"No insolence, sirrah!" replied Oswald, with impatient disdain. "I know you are a man who has long forgotten his proper place, and yet, as you have been a good workman, I am willing to act with forbearance, if you will listen to reason."

"What do you want me to do?" inquired the man, gruffly.

"To consult your own interest," said Oswald. "To sign the masters' declaration—to persuade your associates to do the same; and to leave the intriguers, who have led you into your difficulties, to bear alone the consequences of their evil counsels."

"Atkins is already out of the way."

"So I hear! but there are doubtless others, who are connected with this rebellious conspiracy. My brother, for instance, Mr. Edward Mallory."

"Oh, you want me to accuse him, do you?" demanded Watson, bitterly.

"It is necessary to know the ringleaders," replied Oswald, "that the proper steps may be taken to prevent further mischief. We do not blame the men, and your necessities shall be amply provided for, if you will give me the information I desire."

"So you think I am to be bought, do you? money—money—money. It seems, sir, you set a great value on it, but not so much as I do on my honesty. My friends have trusted me, and you may go elsewhere with your infamous proposal. Go! sir! go! the misery of the starving mechanic is not a spectacle for fine gentlemen like you. Were this house my own, I would command you to leave it."

"But as it happens to be mine, you shall be forced to leave!" cried Oswald, in an angry tone. "I want no ranting politicians, as my tenants. Don't talk to me about misery, when

you can trouble yourself about rubbish like this," and as he spoke, he knocked down a flower-pot, in the window, with a stroke of his cane, and broke it into a thousand atoms.

He then walked in a terrible rage out of the cottage.

The children began to cry, for the loss of their flower, but Ralph stood with his arms folded, watching Mallory till he reached the door.

"Though man cannot punish you, God will!" he then exclaimed in a loud stern voice. "Before another day is past, we shall be revenged! amply revenged!"

Again and again during that evening these words, and the menacing tone in which they had been uttered, rang in Oswald's ears, like a warning of misfortune! but he laughed at his own folly, in remembering the threats of an angry mechanic; and having given orders to his agent, to proceed in the morning to expel

the tenants from the cottages, he went to sup with a party of gay young men at the barracks, who loudly applauded his spirit in clearing his estate of such vermin.

From thence he was summoned, when half intoxicated, to the death-bed of poor Thornton.

The scene in Collard's Buildings was in the meantime very different. After Mallory's departure, a sullen murmur arose in all those wretched dwellings, which might have moved a heart of stone. It was no loud, impatient cry of lamentation, but the low muttering of indignant despair from men who felt that though God's children, there was neither labour, nor food, nor habitation, nor justice, for them, on the face of God's earth, but bowed down by the power of capital, they were compelled to accept the bread of tyranny, or charity.

Ralph Watson, more fierce and sullen in his utter destitution, than men of feebler passions,

was one of the first who broke the silence of despair, and denounced vengeance against those whom he regarded as his oppressors. His old indignation against what he called the wrongs of labour, had now found a fixed and definite object, in the person of Oswald Mallory, whom he justly regarded as the instigator of his father's tyranny.

Eagerly he went from house to house to excite his comrades to remain in their dwellings, and should force be used to expel them, to resist to the last extremity. Though during several preceding days, the threats uttered by policemen in the public houses and elsewhere, as to the measures of violence, which would be ultimately resorted to, had been eagerly repeated with many exaggerations, they had apparently made no impression.

Some of the feeblest of the men had been at one time inclined to give way, but their wives

were desperate, took part with Ralph Watson, and declared that if they only showed a proper spirit, there was not a landlord in the kingdom who would dare to turn out sixty families, to sleep on the highway.

In some parts of the town, there were disturbances during the following night, but though there was little sleep in Collard's Buildings, there was no external evidence of the people's agitation. When Edward Mallory had conducted Mary home, after Thonton's death, they had seen nothing to excite their alarm. The lights were extinguished in every house except that of Ralph Watson, and Edward hoped that in spite of the threats and menaces, which had been expressed by both parties, when the decisive moment arrived, the workmen, in compliance with his advice, would yield without resistance.

Deeply did he lament, that his own near relatives should be guilty of such unprofitable

harshness, towards men, who were already helplessly suffering under the pressure of misfortune; and though he had no power to avert their present misery, he had held out the hope to some of the most deserving, of affording them the means of emigration to a country where industry would suffice to make them prosperous members of the common wealth.

Even when the morning dawned, there was an ominous stillness in that part of the town. No doors were opened, no windows were unbarred, and not a child, of the numbers who usually swarmed in the sunshine, appeared to break the silence, by its sports, or its wails.

During the meeting of Thornton's friends, at the house of Captain Sayers, the same gloomy tranquillity everywhere prevailed. It was already ten o'clock, when Sir Thomas Mallory's agent, a Mr. Barton, accompanied by a party of police, went up to Collard's Buildings, to take possession of the cottages.

Not a creature was to be seen, in any of the narrow lanes, through which they passed, on their way thither; but when they arrived at the end of the street, adjoining the Baronet's property, a long, loud, shrill whistle sounded from the roof of one of the houses, and was rapidly echoed from various quarters.

"It is only the boys, who are looking out for some sport," said the agent to the man next him, "but I have certain information, that the fellows will all march out as quietly as lambs."

"Or like a party of gipsies with their brats and their baggage," said another, with a heartless laugh, for there are none so cruel to the poor, as those of their own class, who are set in authority over them. But though all seemed deserted and desolate around, there were ears which heard, and resented the insult, and it was repeated, as by the speed of a telegraph, in every workman's dwelling.

Mr. Barton, the agent, like many upstarts, despised and hated the workman as much as Sir Thomas Mallory himself; but from a different cause; for these evil feelings originated in the vulgarity of his nature, and an indignant consciousness, that those over whom he domineered in right of office, regarded him as no better than themselves.

Yet Mr. Barton was a very great coward, and nothing but his conviction, that he incurred no personal risk, could have induced him to be the leader of the police, on the present occasion.

But this reliance was destined to be very speedily destroyed. At the very first house where he applied for admission, he found the door barred, and no answer was returned from within. At the second and the third dwelling he met with the same reception. Everywhere there was silence, and nothing more.

"Confound the rascals, are they all deaf, or

are they gone already!" he cried. "There is nothing for it, but to break open the doors."

And forthwith the command was given, to force an entrance into the nearest cottage. But no sooner was the first blow struck, than the upper windows all along the street were suddenly opened, and a volley of stones, thrown by women and children, flew from all sides, against the party.

One of these missiles gave Mr. Barton a sharp blow on the shoulder, and whilst he was swearing furiously, and looking round, as if he could discover from whence it came, the voice of a man within the building near, cried aloud—

"You had better be off, for the first who sets his foot within this house, shall be shot down as dead as a rabbit."

Mr. Barton turned very pale.

"There are too few of us," he said, surveying his little party with a very rueful counte-

nance. "We must retreat, and seek a reinforcement."

A retreat was accordingly commenced, but Mr. Barton soon found that it was the most dangerous manœuvre, which cowardice could have devised; for no sooner had the policemen and their leader, turned their backs on the enemy's quarters, than a volley of stones flew round them from all directions, and every door rapidly unclosed, sent forth a swarm of assailants, who ran after them down the street, hooting and yelling, and pelting them with mud and rubbish.

In every humble street through which they passed, their reception was little better; though not actually attacked, the inhabitants rushed out of their houses to mock and insult them, with the coarsest epithets of reproach and derision.

Mr. Barton's rage, when he was no longer in danger, was quite ungovernable, and when

he reached the residence of the magistrate, where Mr. Mallory was waiting to hear the result of his enterprize, he gave such a terrible and exaggerated account of the resistance he had met with, that it was thought necessary to summon all the police together, who could readily be assembled, and to send them, as quickly as possible, to suppress the riot.

When again attacked, the workmen came out to fight with their assailants, and a numerous mob ran together, from other parts of the town to assist them. Many severe blows were given and received, by both parties, and even the most secluded streets of that neighbourhood had all the appearance of some besieged town, defended by its inhabitants against the inroads of an enemy.

It was a fearful scene. Countryman against countryman, townsman against townsman. The bitter hatred which everywhere exists, between the police and the poor population, here found

a free exercise for its malevolence, and the battle, though on one side originating in the execution of the law, soon assumed all the fierceness of individual passion.

When Edward Mallory left the house of Captain Sayers, he was first aware of the fearful struggle that was going on.

On arriving at the brink of the hill above the town, he heard, with consternation, the wild clamour of the multitude, arising from all the streets beneath.

Blake and Fuller accompanied him, and they were all of opinion that they must make their way even by force through the mob.

Edward's anxiety, on Mary Thornton's account, was excited to the highest pitch, when he thought of her unprotected position, and the anxiety and terror to which her proximity to the scene of the disturbances now exposed her, so immediately after the affliction and trials of the preceding night.

His eagerness to reach her was increased by the obstacles he encountered, and the impatient agony of his heart was redoubled, when on advancing a few paces further, he became aware that the whole scene of the disturbance must be distinctly visible from the windows of her lodging.

Fuller's anxiety to reach his child was little less than that of Edward Mallory, and his expressions of impatience were far more loud.

Blake alone seemed calm and undisturbed. He grasped with a strong hand an arm of each of his companions as they were about to rush forwards, and holding them back, stood for above a minute in perfect silence. His keen eye in the meantime rapidly surveyed the scene.

But though thus master of himself, his heart was agitated by powerful and contending feelings. He dreaded though he longed to be-

hold the daughter, of whose birth, for twenty-one years, he had been kept in ignorance; yet his intellect was perfectly clear and collected, and with the rapidity of a practised commander, he understood the position of the combatants.

"The thickest of the fight," he said, "is round a house to the left, about the middle of the street. The crowd all pressing in that direction, leaves us a passage at the opposite side, and we have nothing to fear, but a few blows from the stones and mud which are flying in all directions. The police will shortly be beaten, and must endeavour to escape on this side, so that if we linger here, we shall have the whole mass of the fugitives and their pursuers to encounter, for there is not a single corner or recess near us, where we can stand back to let them pass."

"The soldiers will next be brought! and Miss Thornton must, if possible, be removed

before there is any discharge of fire-arms," said Edward, eagerly.

"You are right," replied Blake. "If she is in that house, on the slope above, it will not long be a place of safety, when bullets are flying about. Let us now, therefore, advance with all speed."

As the seaman uttered the last words, he passed his strong arms through those of Mallory and Fuller, and drew them rapidly forward, in the direction he had pointed out. But in a few minutes he was compelled to slacken his pace, and the crowd was soon so dense, that the trio could no longer keep together. Even singly, it was with the utmost difficulty they could force a way through the restless mob by which the police was surrounded.

The war of missiles had ceased, for a strong party of workmen, headed by Ralph Watson, had attacked their enemies with cudgels, and

waged such fierce battle, that the leader of the police was soon aware that all resistance was in vain, and that the danger of the position of himself and his men was every moment increasing.

When he had first seen that the fray was likely to be of a very serious character, he had rapidly dispatched a messenger to demand a considerable reinforcement.

But, as is often the case on similar occasions, the persons of authority in the town, reposing on the strength of their own dignity, had despised the idea of any serious opposition being offered by such contemptible fellows as the humble tenants of Sir Thomas Mallory, and now, when unexpectedly made aware, that the vile rabble possess a strength and power in union, of which, fortunately for the peace of society, they are themselves unconscious, that very honourable and dignified gentleman, the mayor, was totally unprepared for the emergency.

The magistrates consulted, and the magistrates talked, whilst the people were fighting. They first proposed to swear in a band of special constables, but whilst they were debating this point, such alarming intelligence was brought from the scene of combat, that Mr. Oswald Mallory advised them not to trust the safety of the town, and of their own wealthy mansions, to the defence of fat cheesemongers, or plethoric grocers, but at once to call out the military.

"The officer on command, at the barracks," he said, "is a particular friend of mine, and in less than five minutes will give the scoundrels a proper lesson. Only shoot down some half dozen of them, and we shall hear no more of rebellion for twenty years to come. Give me authority to act, and I will mount my horse, which is waiting at the door, and ride to the barracks at once."

This proposal was received with loud appro-

bation by the Baronet's very obsequious friends, who worshipped everything aristocratic, and of such gentry the town council was chiefly composed, and they rejoiced that the responsibility of calling out the military should not rest entirely on themselves.

Mr. Mallory, whose feelings, towards what he called the mob, were exceedingly despotic, had no sooner received official authority to summon the soldiers to the assistance of the police, than he set off to the barracks.

As he was mounting his horse, a woman of the lower orders rushed suddenly up to him, and putting a letter into his hand, walked rapidly away.

He recognised the handwriting of the address, and tearing it open, was not surprised to see the signature of Atkins, at the bottom of the few lines it contained, which ran thus:—

"Thornton died in the night. The girl, long called his daughter, is Blake's child, and will soon be your brother's wife. Parkins and your father had better get out of the way. I shall be off in half an hour.

"Your's truly,

"W. Atkins."

Those who stood near Oswald, were astonished by the fearful expression of rage, which distorted his countenance, as he read these words; but he did not utter a syllable! Crushing the paper with violence in his hand, he plunged his spurs furiously into the sides of his horse, and was instantly borne away at a full gallop.

The people looked after him, and admired

his fine riding and handsome person, but they vowed vengeance against him in their hearts, for they well knew the bitter contempt, with which he regarded them, and the readiness with which he would shed their blood, to maintain, what he called public peace and order.

Edward Mallory and his companions were in the meantime forcing their way through the conflict, to the door of Mary Thornton's lodgings.

CHAPTER IX.

Edward Mallory was not wrong in supposing that the position of Mary Thornton during the conflict in Collard's Buildings, was most painful and anxious, for every moment made it less likely that he would be able to come to protect and assist her, and the increasing tumult soon compelled her to give up all idea of venturing to attempt an escape, with no other companions than her servant Nelly and little Lilly.

The child, most fortunately, was not alarmed

by the commotion, and fearless of danger, remained at the window, even when missiles were flying in all directions, to watch, with intense interest, the progress of the fray.

The shrieks and shouts of the mob, against which Mary would gladly have closed her ears, were scarcely heard by Lilly, so deeply was she engrossed by the excitement of the combat, and the wild struggle of ungoverned passion, which was going on beneath. It was the reality of what she had often witnessed on the stage.

"Oh, Miss Thornton," she cried, "do come! They have knocked down one man, and are carrying him back into a house. He is bleeding, and his arms hang as if he was dead. Oh, see—a policeman has lifted up a child; it was quite in the middle of the battle; he passes it over his head to another, and another. Oh, how good of them; it must otherwise have been trodden to death; now it is safe—quite

safe; I see a woman kissing it. The policemen are going back, and there is terrible fighting. But oh, Miss Thornton, there is father—dear father—I am sure it is he, quite in the middle of the crowd. Do come and look; and now I see Mr. Blake, and Mr. Edward Mallory too; they must be coming here."

This time, it needed no second invitation to bring Mary to the window. Eagerly she looked in the direction the child pointed out to her, and there, for at least a quarter of an hour, she continued, with intense agony, to watch Edward Mallory's struggles, as jostled, and pushed, and sometimes struck by the combatants, he slowly made his way through the tumult, occasionally assisted by his companions, but frequently separated from them by the rushing and heaving of the crowd, to whom their decent clothing was sufficient cause for insult and opposition.

Once, in the confusion, he found himself

suddenly by the side of Ralph Watson, who stood still for an instant to observe the position of his men.

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Edward," he said, "get out of this row. This is no place for you."

"Nor for you, nor for any of us," answered the gentleman. "It is madness to persist, when you can gain nothing, and innocent blood must be inevitably shed."

"Blood!" retorted the workman, bitterly, "the blood of a beggar is nothing worth."

And, with a fierce laugh, he waved his bludgeon in the air, and rushed after the mob, who, with loud yells, were pursuing the flying policemen.

But, by quiet words, and steady perseverance, Edward Mallory overcame all opposition; and Mary had, at length, the inexpressible delight of seeing him disengaged from the throng, which hurried down the street in an opposite direction from the dwelling.

Joyful signs of recognition were exchanged between them, as, accompanied by Blake and Fuller, Edward Mallory hurried up the little garden, which divided her dwelling from the street; and he had no sooner passed the threshold of the house door, than, careless of all spectators, Mary rushed down the stairs to welcome him, and in the excitement of the moment, was clasped with ardour to his heart.

Such passages of joy are very rare, even in the longest life—but they are never to be forgotten; and even when death has wrapped his dark dividing mantle round one of the beloved, the remembrance of such moments of felicity remains to beguile the survivor's solitude of half its pangs.

Neither Fuller nor little Lilly was conscious of what was passing near them, for they, too, were engrossed by their own happiness, and the full enjoyment of reciprocal affection,

which, next to love, is the greatest of human blessings.

And poor Blake looked on, and though his heart yearned towards his child, he felt, with a bitter pang, that he had no place in her regard.

This man, of rude energies and strong feelings, had sought her mother's love in his youth, and cruelly deceived by the heartlessness of his ill-chosen wife, he had never since been gladdened by human affection. Disappointments had pursued him, till he believed it was his destiny to live unloved, and though he rejoiced to behold the happiness of others, he had ceased to expect it for himself.

Though he was awhile forgotten even by Edward Mallory, he neither wondered, nor felt mortified by this unintentional neglect.

"It is only natural," he thought. "When the fulness of his own joy is spent, he will remember me," and he drew back, and waited patiently.

But Mallory was of too unselfish a character to be long unmindful of others, and quickly recalling Blake to mind, he felt the deepest sympathy for his position. The task he had undertaken of informing Mary of her real parentage, was one of great difficulty and delicacy. Blake himself was conscious of this, and felt the necessity of leaving the young people, for a time, together. He, therefore, laid his hand on Fuller's arm, and held him back, when they had half ascended the stairs.

"Wait here awhile," he said, "and when Mr. Mallory calls me, I wish to go alone."

Fuller made no reply; but he stood still by the side of Blake, holding Lilly's hand in his, for the next ten minutes, looking out from the staircase window into a little narrow back yard, where a quantity of linen was drying in the bright sunshine.

No stranger, who had, by accident, there

passed by, would have seen anything uncommon in the appearance of these two men; he might, perhaps, have wondered what Blake saw which so profoundly engaged his attention, but he would not have known that he was utterly unconscious of every object before him; he would not have known that the heart of that rough man, standing there so silent and so still, was agitated by one of those internal struggles of feelings, which, heightened by suspense, are, in their rare occurrence, the highest poetry of the great drama of life.

Even Blake never knew what passed in the meanwhile between Mallory and Mary. No doubt, the girl gave utterance to many feelings, on her first discovery of her relationship to a man, whose good qualities she had only recently learned to appreciate, which it would have been most painful to him to hear. She wept bitterly, and Edward could only calm her agitation by reminding her how soon their

marriage would release her from all dependence on her new found parent. At his earnest request, she, at length, restrained her tears, and consented to receive Blake as her father.

The flush of crimson which suddenly overspread the countenance of the seaman, and the light which flashed in his dark eyes, were the only signs which betrayed his intense emotion, when Edward at length unclosed the door at the top of the stairs, and pronounced his name.

He sprang up to him, three steps at a time, and without uttering a syllable, entered Mary's presence.

Even though his agitation was very great, there was a dignity in the manner in which the strong man, mastering his feelings with the same iron will, with which he had in other days mastered the storm and the tempest, advanced to his child, and restraining the impulse to clasp her in his arms, took the hand

she held out to him, and pressed it to his lips.

But in spite of Blake's self-command, his eyes were dim with tears. Mary saw this, and subdued by such an evidence of feeling, and a consciousness of the natural tie between them, she arose—stretched out her arms to her long lost parent, and burst into tears, as he pressed her to his heart.

Edward beheld with pleasure, this happy result of a meeting he had much dreaded; and his tender attentions soon restored Mary to composure.

In brief words he then rapidly related to her the events of the morning, and the necessity for their taking advantage of the temporary cessation of hostilities between the policemen and the workmen, to escape from the neighbourhood of the disturbances.

To this she readily consented, and Fuller having heard in the crowd, that messengers

had already been sent to the barracks, to bring the soldiers, to assist the civil force, both Blake and Mallory were of opinion that they must set off without a moment's delay.

Mary hastily snatched up a bonnet and shawl, Nelly took Lilly by the hand, and preceded by the three men, they left the house.

Scattered parties of women and children, from other parts of the town, still filled the streets, and though the workmen had all retreated into the cottages, several boys were to be seen on the roofs acting as scouts.

Suddenly the urchins raised the cry of "the soldiers are coming—the soldiers are coming," and the words were echoed quickly from all the neighbouring lanes and alleys.

Blake, who, with his party, had not yet left the garden in front of Mary's dwelling, suddenly stopped.

"There is only one road forward," he said,

"if the soldiers are already there, we must retreat."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when a crowd of men and boys, clammoring and shouting, ran round the corner of the nearest street. Every instant this mob seemed to multiply, and still ran wildly on, till wheeling round the houses, a troop of dragoons rode rapidly, with drawn swords, up Collard's Buildings, and before Blake and his companions had regained the house, advanced to the open ground, and took up a commanding position between Mary's dwelling and the habitations of the rioters. The seaman hurried his party again into the passage, and hastily closed and bolted the front room, whilst Edward led Mary up stairs, and Nelly and Fuller followed them with little Lilly.

They had all seen, with astonishment, that Oswald Mallory rode at the side of the officer who commanded the dragoons, and eagerly

pointed out to him the cottages belonging to the Baronet.

The police were then ordered to summon the tenants for the last time, to evacuate these tenements without further resistance.

This appeal was answered by the discharge of several guns through holes in the closed shutters of one of the largest houses. At the same time, a numerous mob, which had gathered from other parts of the town on a cliff in the rear of the soldiers, began to pelt them and their horses furiously with mud and stones.

CHAPTER X.

The party in Mary's lodging, who watched eagerly at the windows, saw that Oswald Mallory talked with great violence to the commanding officer, who highly disapproved of Sir Thomas Mallory's conduct towards his destitute workmen, by which the riot had been provoked; and was most unwilling to proceed to extreme measures, as long as any hope remained of persuading the people to submit.

But the passions of the angry multitude

were no longer to be restrained, either by fear, or reason, and though the officer was not a man to be excited to violence by the outrageous language of Mr. Oswald Mallory, he saw, at length, that he had carried forbearance as far as was compatible with duty, with the safety of his men, and the security of the whole town.

He then ordered that the riot act should be read in due form.

The women laughed, and the crowds of boys who swelled the mob, believing that the soldiers would only fire with blank cartridges, continued yelling, and screaming, and throwing stones, during the whole of this warning, with greater insolence and violence than before.

At length the word to fire was given, but as the rioters had foreseen, the first volley was discharged above their heads, and though startled a moment by the noise, yet when the smoke cleared away, and it was evident that

no one in the crowd had received any injury. they set up a loud shout of triumph, which was again and again renewed, whilst the soldiers reloaded their muskets, and prepared for a second discharge.

The fiery horse which Oswald Mallory rode, already frightened and irritated by the unusual sounds, at length became ungovernable, and rearing and plunging, in spite of all its rider's efforts to hold it back, dashed wildly along the front of the soldiers' line, at the very instant, when they discharged their guns for the second time.

"He is lost! he is lost! he is a dead man!" exclaimed Edward and Blake at the same time, as gazing from the window, they beheld the flash of the firelocks, and saw Oswald reel in his saddle; whilst his horse, maddened by the renewed report of fire arms, dashed forward amongst the thickest of the mob.

For a time the rider kept his seat, and

Edward and all who were with him, watched with intense anxiety and horror for the result. It seemed impossible, that he could have passed unscathed amidst the flying balls. The women and children fled before the plunging horse, but two of the workmen seizing it by the bridle, arrested its course, and the whole multitude gave one long shout of triumph, when they saw that the man, whom they considered their worst enemy, was in their power.

The commanding officer no sooner understood what had happened, than he gave his men an order to charge on the mob with drawn sabres, for the rescue of Mr. Mallory. In an instant he was obeyed, and the confusion which ensued was wild and fearful.

Children were thrown down and trodden under the feet of the horses, the women unable to escape, uttered screams and menaces, whilst the men, still undismayed, endeavoured to

arrest the progress of the soldiers. Amidst all this turmoil, Oswald Mallory was for awhile forgotten, and his horse being again at liberty, turned rapidly in the direction whence it came, and gallopped across the open ground.

But it had not proceeded for, when the reins dropped from the hands of its rider, and Oswald Mallory fell lifeless from the saddle.

The horse still rushed on, and dragged the corpse along the ground, one of the feet being entangled in the stirrup. A soldier at length seized it by the bridle, and others dismounted and raised the bleeding body from the ground. But life was for ever extinct.

It was with difficulty that Blake, with his usual presence of mind, restrained Edward from rushing out to ascertain if his brother yet lived, and if it were possible to render him any assistance.

"He wilfully broke every bond, which existed between you," said the seaman, "and

as your dissension was a theme of common discourse, were you now to appear, it would seem as if you triumphed in his destruction."

"I bear him no enmity," replied Edward, "and surely no personal consideration ought to prevent a brother lending a brother every aid in danger.

"He is far beyond all human care," said Blake, who had never once removed his eyes from the terrible scene that was passing in the street below. "Go from the window, my good friend," he continued. "It is a terrible spectacle, to see a proud man thus struck down in the heat of ungoverned passion. But go from the window, your brother is beyond all human aid, and those who are now near him, are the fittest persons to show him that attention, which is due to the dead. It is an awful lesson, when we remember that it was he himself who provoked the fray."

Whilst Blake was thus speaking, Mary had

gently taken Edward by the hand, and led him to a seat at the back part of the room. He was too much agitated to speak, and for a few minutes he hid his face and wept.

He had never hated his brother, and he was now most severely shocked by his awful and terrible fate. He no longer remembered Oswald's harshness and injustice, but a fountain of old affection sprung up afresh in his heart, and he thought, with deep regret, of the days when they were boys together, before jealousy and evil counsellors had excited discord between them.

But death had now destroyed all hope of reconciliation, and his grief for his brother's appalling fate was aggravated by the remembrance of the malignant obstinacy with which he had rejected all his overtures for peace and reunion.

Edward's next thought was of his father, and of the agony and despair which the death

of his favorite son must occasion him, and he felt with profound regret, that though likewise his child, it was not in his power to afford, or even to offer him consolation.

Mary, who was little less agitated than himself, nevertheless strove to perform the true office of woman, that of soothing and supporting him in his sorrow.

Blake and Fuller, in the meantime, were still eargerly watching what was passing without.

The death of Oswald Mallory, so unexpected and so appalling, and the wounds received by several of the rioters, had produced a wonderful effect on all parties concerned in the disturbance. The clamour and the violence of the mob were hushed, and the people, as if awed by the presence of death, rapidly retreated from the street; the police stood in consternation, waiting for further orders, and some of the soldiers, having ridden after the

scattered throng, the remainder had dismounted, and were occupied in preparing for the removal of the corpse af Mr. Oswald Mallory.

A flag of truce was soon afterwards hung out from one of the cottages, and an intimation was given, that the inhabitants would vacate the buildings without further resistance, if the commanding officer would give them an assurance that they should be allowed to depart unmolested.

To this proposal, the captain of the dragoons, who was anxious to avoid bloodshed, gladly consented, only stipulating that all the tenants of Sir Thomas Mallory should, with their wives and families, quit the cottages and the neighbourhood without further delay, whilst the police and his soldiers were still there to maintain order.

Thus, even the most obstinate of the workmen, who had madly listened to the suggestions of designing and turbulent men, to

set the laws openly at defiance, though utterly unable to prevent their enforcement, were compelled, after long suffering and needless bloodshed, to submit to established authority without having gained the slightest advantage by the struggle.

And this must ever be the termination of such insubordination, till the working classes have learnt, by fatal and often repeated failures, that it is not by such means as partial strikes, and petty rebellions, that they are to triumph over the various evils attendant on poverty and servitude.

It was a melancholy spectacle to see the half famished workmen turned out of the homes where their children had been born—where they had reposed from labour, and shared, with their wives, the toils and pleasures of their hard existence for the last ten years.

Most of their furniture had already been

sold, and the prudent having foreseen the event of a struggle they could not prevent, had previously removed the few articles of value they still retained, so that the families, when they departed, had little to carry with them, except their infants, and the aged and infirm.

The helpless were conveyed to the workhouse, and there left amongst strangers, whilst the houseless and penniless crowd sought a shelter for the night in deserted out-houses, or under such miserable tents, as they were able to erect in the lanes around the town; and none knew the sorrow of those poor creatures' mournful hearts!—none knew how that long dark, dreary night, they brooded in despair over their misery and their desolation. No one cared for their sufferings.

The past was all swept away—their homes, to which they had clung, even in adversity, with the affection of habit—the daily routine

of simple life—the acquisitions of parsimonious industry—the hopes of pleasant days to come, all—all were destroyed. They had no future, and without bread to eat, or labour to procure it, they were cast out into the world, to begin again the hard struggle, which it is the lot of the destitute to wage.

And it was by their own folly that all this had been brought to pass, was the unfeeling observation of those worthy, peaceable members of society, whose hunger had never been sharpened by want, and whose bodies had never been bent by toil. They had resisted oppression, and they had failed; they had striven, as all men do, to mend their condition; but they had done it injudiciously, and were ruined—therefore they were in the wrong.

But let the poor take counsel—let them cease to be deluded by mock agitators—let them be firm and persevering, true to each

other and to the common interests of their class—let them be patient and united in their general efforts for their common welfare—let them seek to acquire knowledge and to save money—their progress may be slow, but it will be sure! A day will come, when their superiors will no longer dare to despise them—when the workman, who sells his labour, may make conditions as well as the capitalist who buys it, and ceasing to be regarded as a mere machine, on which no more money is to be expended, than suffices to set it in motion, he will successfully assert his right, not only to the name, but to the dignity and privileges of a free man.

Sir Thomas Mallory had won a great victory! He was again master of his cottages, and could escape paying the rates, with which they had been charged, by letting them with the ground. But dearly had he purchased his triumph by the death of his favourite son.

The body of Oswald Mallory was brought into a room on the ground floor of the house occupied by Mary Thornton. A surgeon was quickly summoned, and a messenger sent off to apprise the Baronet of the fatal occurrence.

The corpse was laid on a table, and every means essayed to restore animation; but all without effect. The spark of life was for ever extinct.

Blake, by Edward Mallory's request, was present whilst these efforts were made, and he was still in the room when Sir Thomas Mallory arrived.

We shall not attempt to describe the despair of the wilful and passionate old man, when he beheld the corpse of his beloved, his idolised son, and then first understood the whole extent of his calamity.

Even Blake, whose life had been blasted by his malevolence, whose child had been torn

from him to gratify his avarice, whose character had been vilified to satisfy his revenge, when he beheld the agony of the bereaved father, was moved to compassion.

Yet, as he stood with his arms folded on his breast, and listened to the wild lamentations of the proud old man for the idol of his life, for whose gratification he had immolated every generous feeling, and on whom every sensibility and affection of his narrow heart had been, for years, concentrated, though he was too generous to exult in the agony he beheld, he felt, with profound awe, how wonderfully the Providence of Heaven had ordained that evil passions and unbridled selfishness should prove the inevitable means of their own punishment.

Sir Thomas Mallory before long observed him, and felt indignant at being thus watched by a stranger. His pride was not yet subdued. But when he cast a glance of anger at Blake, he was even at that solemn moment struck by

the stern aspect of the man who met his eyes unmoved.

"Who are you, sir?" he haughtily demanded. "Who are you, who have the presumption to intrude into the chamber of death, and to pry into the mysteries of a father's grief, as if you were watching the horrors of a stage spectacle?"

"You knew me once, Sir Thomas," answered the seaman; "you knew me well; and though I had married your own sister, condemned me, without regard either for compassion or justice, to a life of exile and dishonour. You knew me, Sir Thomas, when you taught my wife to mistrust me, and allowed a villain, who called himself your friend, to rob me of my only child, in order to sequester her inheritance. My name is Blake! you know me now, I presume, sir!"

"Scoundrel," muttered the Baronet, between

hir teeth. "Is this an hour, or place, to add insult to my sorrow."

"I came neither to insult nor to reproach," replied Blake. "The time for that is past, for I am happy in the possession of my child, and heaven has punished you! we have met by accident, we may never meet again, but it may console you on the bed of death, Sir Thomas, when you remember Blake, and the injustice you have done him, to know that he pitied and forgave you."

So saying, the seaman left the old man to his sorrow, and hastened to inform Edward of his father's presence in the chamber of death.

CHAPTER XI.

In a few days after the occurrence of the events recounted in the preceding chapter, the tranquillity of the town of S—— was completely restored.

The funeral of poor Thornton had been performed with respectful propriety, and the body of Oswald Mallory had been conveyed to Stoke Court, to await a more pompous interment.

The houseless workmen had found some miserable refuge, and labourers were busily employed in dismantling their former habitations.

But though business and pleasure again went on, apparently as usual, beneath this external tranquillity there was great social agitation.

The sudden failure of the London Bank had compelled Mr. Parkins to resign all hope of extricating himself from his embarrassments by the ruin of Sir Thomas Mallory, and convinced of the impossibility of averting the immediate stoppage of the Joint Stock Bank, and rendered desperate by the consciousness of his own various and enormous liabilities he had absconded with all the money he could collect.

Miss Parkins, who had been thrown into violent fits of hysterics, by Oswald Mallory's death, was suddenly restored to her senses, by

the discovery of this calamity, and vented her mortification and her rage in violent invectives against her father. But not a friend came, either to console, or assist them. Such people have many acquaintance, but no friends. It had been their delight in prosperity to excite envy, and their misfortunes were a triumph to their former rivals.

Miss Parkins's first care was to secure all the valuables she could collect before her father's creditors obtained admission to the house. Her mother commended her discretion, and found some comfort in adversity from the reflection, that she had a little private purse of her own, which would amply provide for all their immediate wants.

But the consternation and the misery which the disappearance of the attorney, and the failure of the Joint Stock Bank produced in the town of S——, were most extensive and terrible.

Poor ladies, who had been tempted by large interest to lay out a part of their little capital in shares—retired tradesmen, parsimonious clerks, and toiling artizans, were all involved in a common ruin; and the most part, then first discovered, how boundless were the liabilities to which they were subjected even by the possession of a single share.

Sir Thomas Mallory was appalled when he heard the news, for he well knew, that the loss of the ready money he had left by Parkins's persuasion in the bank, was a small misfortune, compared to the foreclosure of the mortgages on the estate of Stoke Court, which must speedily and inevitably follow. But he endeavoured to forget his affliction in preparing for the splendid funeral of his worthless son.

Yet still inexorable, even though death had so nearly approached him, he gave no intimation of retaining any consciousness, that he had

a child in existence, who was still the heir to his title, though no estates might remain for him to inherit.

But on that title, Edward Mallory set not the smallest value. He knew that even in England, it was little worth in the eyes of any one, without money to maintain its dignity, and he had already decided to make a nobler use of the little fortune he possessed, than to waste it in a vain struggle to maintain a position in English society, which could in no way contribute to increase either his happiness or his self-respect.

Rejected by his father, it was his most ardent desire to hasten the celebration of his marriage with Mary Thornton, and to bid farewell to his native land with as little delay as possible.

With the money he had at his command, he proposed to assist the emigration of the suffering workmen and their families to America,

on condition that he should be gradually repaid, from the profits of their future labours, and Mr. Gerard more than doubled the sum, which Edward was able to advance in aid of this benevolent scheme.

Blake offered the use of a large ship belonging to him, which had recently come into the port of S——, in quest of a freight, to convey Edward Mallory and his bride, and all who chose to accompany them to another hemisphere.

Edward, who was anxious to avoid unpleasant collision with his father, would gladly have resigned, in silence, all claims on him, in right of his grandmother's settlement, but Blake, after due consideration, would not consent to renounce his daughter's portion.

"It was only robbing her of the money," he said, "for the benefit of the Baronet's creditors, and that he should be guilty both of folly and injustice were he to neglect enforcing payment. He felt no doubt, that Sir Thomas

would gladly pay the money, rather than incur the dishonour, which must attend the publication of such a shameful transaction by a lawsuit."

In this opinion, Mr. Gerard agreed with the seaman, and he offered to go himself to Stoke Court, and bring the business at once to a conclusion.

The funeral of Oswald Mallory had taken place, and the deserted stillness which follows the removal of the dead, was felt daily more and more by his desolate father, as he sat alone in his large and gloomy mansion, lamenting his lost son, and his own ruined fortunes.

The third day of his solitude had arrived, when he was startled by the ringing of the great hall bell, and then heard, with astonishment, the name of Mr. Gerard announced, by the domestic, who threw open the library door to give admission to a visitor.

He had been intimate with that gentleman

in youth, but since the rejection of Gerard's suit for his sister Edith's hand, they had never again met, nor had the merchant ever afterwards crossed the threshold of the great landed proprietor.

The Baronet now received him with that look of impertinent surprise, and affected superiority, which foolish and conceited men imagine to be very imposing. But Mr. Gerard was not to be awed by any assumption, and with the ease of a man of the world, he took the seat that was placed for him, and opened the conversation, by requesting that, as he came on business, the Baronet would pardon his intrusion.

"I am in the habit of leaving all business to be settled by my solicitor," was the cold reply.

"I am not aware who is your solicitor, at present," returned Mr. Gerard; "and, I believe, when I have explained my errand, you

will no longer be displeased that I make this direct application to yourself."

The Baronet bowed in silence, and Mr. Gerard thus continued—

"You probably know, Sir Thomas, that there was a marriage settlement made by your father and mother."

The countenance of the Baronet suddenly assumed a restless and uneasy expression; the nervous eagerness of his eye was sufficient evidence of guilt, though endeavouring to assume an appearance of indifference, he replied—

"That he was not aware that any such document existed amongst his family papers."

"Probably not," replied Mr. Gerard, tranquilly, for out of respect to Edward's wishes, he was anxious to avoid bringing any direct accusation against Sir Thomas. "It is most likely that your father placed it in the hands

of old Mr. Parkins, who was his solicitor, and one of the trustees."

"Upon my honour, I am not aware of such a circumstance," replied the Baronet, turning very pale; "nor does it appear to me, that it is a matter which concerns you, sir, in the least."

"But it concerns those who have deputed me to urge their claims," said the merchant. "It concerns Mr. Blake, whose daughter having reached the age of twenty-one, requests the payment of the sum of three thousand three hundred and odd pounds, secured to her by that settlement, which is now in Mr. Blake's possession."

"The estate on which the portions for the grand-children were secured, is now in the hands of Mr. Parkins's creditors," replied Sir Thomas, quite forgetting that he had previously denied all knowledge of the deed.

"So I have heard," said Gerard; "and I have heard likewise that the sum due to your youngest son, has also never been paid."

"Has he, too, commissioned you to accuse his father of fraud?" cried the old man, with fearful virulence.

"No, Sir Thomas! although the document now in possession of the heirs, is such indisputable evidence of their right, that no court of justice could refuse to acknowledge it, Mr. Edward Mallory, aware of your embarrassments, refuses to assert his claims."

"My embarrassments!" echoed the Baronet, in a tone of bitter mortification. "Yes, it is perfectly true, that owing to the peculations of that scoundrel Parkins, I am hourly expecting an execution in my house, of which, doubtless, my son is perfectly aware, and knowing that I have no money to give him, makes a merit of his forbearance."

"You judge most harshly and unjustly," replied the merchant, whose honest indignation

was now thoroughly aroused. "Mr. Edward Mallory did not press his demands on his father, for a sum, which was long since justly his due, because he wished to spare him the shame of knowing that he and others were aware that an attempt had been made in Mr. Parkins's office, to destroy his grandmother's marriage settlement, so that, freed from all encumbrance, the estate might be sold to the solicitor."

"Good heavens! has that traitor Parkins played me false!" cried Sir Thomas, turning as pale as death, and his head and hands shaking with his extreme agitation.

"Mr. Parkins believed that the settlement was destroyed," was the calm reply of Mr. Gerard. "By a curious accident, it was rescued from the flames, and if you, Sir Thomas, will comply with the just demands of Mr. Blake, no further questions will be asked by any party concerned."

"But where can I get the money to pay him?" demanded Sir Thomas, now totally overcome with shame and confusion.

"Surely a man of your consideration possesses some credit," said the merchant, calmly.

"Not for a shilling," was the reply. "I knew I had debts, but till Parkins absconded, I never suspected the extent of my liabilities. I must still have property, if my affairs were arranged, but I don't understand them, I confess I never did understand money matters, and now, when I have more need than I ever had in my whole life before of some one to assist me, my eldest son, who had a head and talent for everything—the son who was the sole prop of my old age, has been snatched from me by a violent death. There never was a man in such a position as I am."

"But you have a son still living, Sir Thomas," said Mr. Gerard, watching with

a searching eye the effect his words produced.

The light of anger flashed suddenly in the heavy eyes of the Baronet.

"Yes, sir," he said, "I had another son, but he who bears me that relationship is a rebel to my authority and my principles—a radical, who forgetting that he belongs to an ancient family of the English aristocracy, has disgraced himself by becoming what he is pleased to call the friend of the people. He has renounced his family, and I have renounced his services."

"But allow me to tell you, Sir Thomas, that he still preserves for you, the dutiful feelings of a son," said the merchant. "He has already more than once endeavoured to obtain your pardon, and certainly the forbearance he has shown, in the business we have discussed to-day, has a right to consideration. I do assure you that he is ready to re-

nounce every claim which is given him by the law, and requires no other indemnification than a reconciliation with you, before he again leaves England."

"I suppose he repents his folly, now he is next heir to my title," said the proud old man. "Well—well—you may tell him I pardon his disobedience, if that is any satisfaction to him, but he must dispense with my blessing. I cannot see him; it would be insulting the memory of the dead. But to speak of other matters—I have been considering, sir, where I am to find this money, which I am to pay to Mr. Blake. It is understood that my son waves all claim, and gives me a receipt in due form, for his legacy, the same as if he had received it."

"Certainly," answered Mr. Gerard, whose noble nature was every moment more and more disgusted, with the sordid character of the man, whose foolish extravagance and mean

selfishness, had been the causes of his present abject position.

"I have railway shares in the house," continued the Baronet, which are well worth three thousand three hundred pounds, if Mr. Blake will take them in payment. If not—really at the present moment, I cannot lay my hands on anything else, and considering my character as a public man, my position in the county, and my connexions, I am very anxious to meet his wishes, and to induce him to bury the whole transaction in oblivion."

"Will you allow me to see these securities?" asked the merchant, quietly.

"Certainly, Mr. Gerard, certainly," returned the Baronet, with more civility than he had yet shown to his visitor. "You shall see them at once."

So saying he unlocked a drawer of his library table and produced the bonds.

"The fact is, I am very glad for Mr. Blake

to have these securities," he said, "for if he did not, another creditor would. Are you satisfied, Mr. Gerard?"

"Perfectly," was that gentleman's reply, for he felt at once the expediency of accepting railway shares, since there was no chance of obtaining money.

Fortunately, prepared for every emergency, he had brought a receipt in due form, signed by Mary Blake, for the amount of her grandmother's legacy, which he at once placed in Sir Thomas Mallory's hands, promising that a similar paper should be forwarded to him, with the least possible delay, from Mr. Edward Mallory.

The needy Baronet shewed no compunction at thus robbing his son of his birthright; but the forbearance Edward had exercised towards him, probably, at length, made some impression on his obdurate heart, for when Mr. Gerard took his leave, he charged him with a kinder

message to his son, than his language at the commencement of their interview, had led the merchant to expect. And this was the last communication which Edward ever received from his father.

He heard from others, with deep regret, and a feeling almost amounting to shame, two days afterwards, that the Baronet was driven, by an execution, from the mansion of his ancestors, and that the whole of his heavily encumbered estates were to be sold to pay the mortgages upon them. A compromise was subsequently made with the creditors, and with a small sum which remained, when all the debts were paid, an annuity was purchased for the life of Sir Thomas Mallory.

But this arrangement did not take place till after his son had left the country. Though the pittance was small, it enabled the Baronet to reside in a boarding house at Cheltenham, where his title gave him admission to what is

there considered the first circle of society. Aristocratic spinsters, and ambitious dowagers were delighted to have a Baronet at their parties, and such are the prejudices of society, that this worthless and useless being is treated with a respect and deference denied in England, to all of humble birth.

CHAPTER XII.

On the evening after the death of Oswald Mallory, Mary Thornton was conducted by her acknowledged father, Mr. Blake, to a handsome lodging, where, assuming her real name, she remained under his protection, for some weeks after poor Mr. Thornton's funeral. She mourned for the Custom House Officer, as for a near relative, and Edward could not persuade her to fix a day for their marriage, till more than a month after his death. The wedding of Nelly

and Frank Bernard was to take place on the same morning, and little Lilly Fuller, who still remained under Mary's care, was to accompany them to church.

Both the lady and her servant had many preparations and purchases to make, preparatory to their voyage to America, and Blake and Edward Mallory had other affairs to arrange.

A marriage settlement was to be made, and Edward insisted that the whole of Mary's fortune should be secured to herself, though when she discovered what a noble sacrifice he had made to pay Thornton's debts, whilst he believed her to be the daughter of the Custom-House Officer, she strongly opposed such an arrangement, and insisted that there should be no separate interests between them.

But though neither Mallory nor Blake approved of the clumsy legal expedient, which, to secure a woman's property for herself and

her children, takes it from her husband's power, to place it in the hands of trustees, and both had reason to know the dangerous abuses to which such an arrangement is liable, their anxiety for Mary's future welfare compelled them, in default of other means, to make a settlement in the usual form.

Edward persisted in refusing to accept any part of Mary's fortune; but after all he had expended for Thornton, and the sum he had advanced to assist to defray the expenses of the emigration of twelve families to America, he still possessed a thousand pounds, and with this capital, and the land he had already brought into cultivation, around his western home, he desired no further riches, except the profits of his future industry.

Mary had been educated with too much simplicity to be ambitious of wealth, and such was her reliance on Edward's power to sustain and support her through the trials of life, in

whatever country their future lot might be cast, that she would joyfully have given him her hand at the altar, had neither of them possessed a shilling in the world.

At length their wedding day arrived—a day of anxiety and sorrow to many, but which, to them, seemed only to confirm their assurance of future happiness.

It was Mary's wish that the ceremony should be performed as privately as possible; but though the party walked separately to church, and Blake took his daughter and little Lilly thither by the quietest streets, the secret became known, and when Edward Mallory entered the sacred edifice, he found, to his surprise, that it was already crowded.

Numbers of the middle classes, who had heard of his noble conduct towards Fuller and Thornton, had come to testify their respect, and hundreds of the working people, and their wives and children, were crowded within and

around the church, to prove, as far as was in their power, their gratitude for the deep interest which Edward Mallory had testified in their welfare.

Mary arrived soon after, accompanied by her father, and was welcomed by a general murmur of approbation. The gentle charity, with which she had ever treated the poor—the beautiful self-devotion with which she had performed her duty as a daughter to the last moment of poor Thornton's unfortunate life, as well as her singular and interesting story, won for her the universal sympathy of those assembled to witness her wedding; and many who gazed upon her simple beauty, as she approached the altar, shed tears of heartfelt pleasure.

Little Lilly was the only bride's maid, and Fuller, that day, was a proud man, when he beheld his child restored to the position in society he once possessed; but of

which, he feared, his follies had for ever robbed her.

Captain Sayers, who was present at the ceremony, out of his great admiration for the past, insisted on putting in practise the good old custom of kissing the bride.

With this, Mary would gladly have dispensed, had it been possible to do so, without giving offence to the friend of her childhood, and the companion of him, who had for years supplied to her the want of home and kindred.

So Captain Sayers actually kissed the bride in the church; and that honour often afforded the veteran a subject for his evening conversations, when she was far away across the wide Atlantic.

After the celebration of Nelly's wedding, the whole party left the church together; and when Edward appeared with his wife leaning on his arm, the throng assembled in the street

no longer thought it necessary to maintain silence.

Three cheers were given as the bride and bridegroom descended the steps of the portico, and many blessings followed them as they passed along.

It was the proudest and the happiest day of Blake's life; and now when he dances his grandchild on his knee, and has won by his affection the devoted attachment of his long lost daughter, he still looks back to it with rejoicing.

A wedding breakfast was prepared for the whole party, at Mr. Gerard's, and though there was neither pomp, nor ceremony, nor vain expense, a happier circle never assembled on such an occasion.

Love, which is too often absent from modern marriages, where avarice, or vanity assumes his form, there sanctified the union of the wedded pairs, and diffused its cheerful and

harmonious influence over the friends who rejoiced in their happiness.

Mr. Gerard made a present to the bride of a small box of plate, suitable, and necessary for her future establishment, and Nelly received a wedding portion from her former mistress.

Mr. Blake presented Mathew Fuller with the sum of two hundred pounds.

The agitation of the poor actor, on perceiving the value of the gift, was so great, that he could with difficulty find words to thank his benefactor.

"You owe me no gratitude," said Blake, kindly interrupting him. "Without your honesty, in resisting every temptation, to sell to Parkins the evidence of his villany, we should never have been able to enforce my daughter's claims to her inheritance. Accept that money as a proof of our united gratitude. With this small capital, in the land where we

are going, you are certain, by industry and perseverance, to arrive at affluence."

Three days afterwards, Edward Mallory and his bride, with their friends and companions, embarked for America.

Mr. Blake commanded his own vessel, in which they sailed, and the emigrants, as they left the port of S——, were followed by the loud acclamations and good wishes of the friendly multitude which had assembled to witness their departure.

A remote town of America is now their home, and in this far land, their virtues have been requited by peaceful happiness, and their industry by abundance.

Edward Mallory has put in execution his favourite plan of forming a society to assist the emigration of his countrymen.

During the past year, numerous English families, who were struggling with all the complicated evils of poverty in our overpeopled

towns, have been enabled by his exertions to join the prosperous community, where he and his devoted wife, are indefatigable labourers, for the moral improvement, as well as the material welfare of their fellow creatures.

THE END.

T. C. Newby, Printer, 30, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square.

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